ISEAS Series on Islam

Islamic Connections

Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia

EDITED BY

R. MICHAEL FEENER • TERENJIT SEVEA

NUS

National University
of Singapore

Islamic Connections

The **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies** (**ISEAS**) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute's research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued almost 2,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.

ISEAS Series on Islam

Islamic Connections

Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia

EDITED BY
R. MICHAEL FEENER • TERENJIT SEVEA

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
Singapore

First published in Singapore in 2009 by ISEAS Publishing
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Pasir Panjang
Singapore 119614

E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg
Website: http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

© 2009 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

The responsibility for facts and opinions in this publication rests exclusively with the contributors and their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views or the policies of ISEAS or its supporters.

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Islamic connections : studies of South and Southeast Asia / edited by R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea.
1. Islam—Southeast Asia.
2. Islam—South Asia.
I. Feener, R. Michael.
II. Sevea, Terenjit.

BP63 A8I821 2009

ISBN 978-981-230-923-5 (hard cover)
ISBN 978-981-230-924-2 (PDF)

This book is meant for educational and learning purposes. The authors of the book have taken all reasonable care to ensure that the contents of the book do not violate any existing copyright or other intellectual property rights of any person in any manner whatsoever. In the event the authors have been unable to track any source and if any copyright has been inadvertently infringed, please notify the publisher in writing for corrective action.

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd
Printed in Singapore by Chung Printing

CONTENTS

Acknowledgedments vii

The Contributors ix

Introduction: Issues and Ideologies in the Study of Regional Muslim Cultures xiii
R. Michael Feener

1. Connected Histories? Regional Historiography and Theories of Cultural Contact Between Early South and Southeast Asia 1
Daud Ali

2. Like Banners on the Sea: Muslim Trade Networks and Islamization in Malabar and Maritime Southeast Asia 25
Sebastian R. Prange

3. Circulating Islam: Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic Traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara 48
Torsten Tschacher

4. From Jewish Disciple to Muslim Guru: On Literary and Religious Transformations in Late Nineteenth Century Java 68
Ronit Ricci

5. Wayang Parsi, Bangsawan and Printing: Commercial Cultural Exchange between South Asia and the Malay World 86
Jan van der Putten

6. Religion and the Undermining of British Rule in South and Southeast Asia during the Great War 109
Kees van Dijk

7. The Ahmadiyya Print Jihad in South and Southeast Asia 134
Iqbal Singh Sevea

8. Making Medinas in the East: Islamist Connections and *Progressive Islam* 149
Terenjit Sevea

9. Shari'a-mindedness in the Malay World and the Indian Connection: The Contributions of Nur al-Din al-Raniri and Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat 175
Peter G. Riddell

10. The Tablighi Jama'at as Vehicle of (Re)Discovery: Conversion Narratives and the Appropriation of India in the Southeast Asian Tablighi Movement 195
Farish A. Noor

11. From Karachi to Kuala Lumpur: Charting Sufi Identity across the Indian Ocean 219
Robert Rozehnal

Index 237

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Islamic Connections* project was formally launched in Singapore in June 2007 with a conference entitled "Re-centering Islam: Islamic Linkages between South and Southeast Asia", featuring international scholars of South and Southeast Asian Islam and Muslim linkages. The conference was made possible by the generous funding provided by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), the Department of Malay Studies and the Religion Research Cluster at the National University of Singapore (NUS), and the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS). We are grateful to the Director of ISEAS, K. Kesavapany, for his support and interest in the project, and ISEAS staff, who managed a complex programme of activities with remarkable efficiency. We were also fortunate to attain the help of Shabbir Hussain Mustafa throughout various aspects of organizing this conference. Particular thanks are due to Falak Sufi who was one of the first to conceive of this project in 2007, but passed on before its completion. She also played a significant intellectual and editorial role in shaping the final text.

We are indebted to the following participants in the "Re-centering Islam" conference for their contributions (in order of presentations): Daud Ali (Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies); Syed Farid Alatas (Department of Malay Studies, NUS); Sebastian Prange (Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies); Ronit Ricci (Asia Research Institute, NUS); Torsten Tschacher (Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Heidelberg); Farish Noor (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University); Kees van Dijk (KITLV, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies); Clive Kessler (School of Sociology and Anthropology, University of New South Wales); Iqbal Singh Sevea (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University); Asghar Ali Engineer (Centre for Study of Society and Secularism); Jan van der Putten (Department of Malay Studies, NUS); Peter Riddell (Centre for Islamic Studies, London School of Theology). Other colleagues who participated in the conference discussions include Anthony Reid (Asia Research Institute, NUS); Merle Ricklefs (Department of History, NUS); Sharon Siddique (Sreekumar Siddique and Co.); and Noorhaidi Hasan (Asia Research Institute, NUS). John Sidel (Department of Government,

London School of Economics and Political Science), and Michael Laffan (Department of History, Princeton University) also provided valuable advice in the preliminary stages of organizing this conference.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

R. MICHAEL FEENER's research focuses on the intellectual and cultural history of Islam in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Born in Salem, Massachusetts, he was trained in Islamic Studies and foreign languages at Boston University, Cornell, and the University of Chicago, as well as in Indonesia, Egypt, and Yemen. He is concurrently Associate Professor of History at the National University of Singapore and Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute. His current research project is a study of Shari'a implementation in contemporary Aceh.

DAUD ALI lectures in early and medieval Indian History at SOAS. His areas of research have been the evolution of religious practices and ideas in classical and medieval India, the growth and spread of courtly culture, and the relationship between ethics, politics and aesthetics among Indian elites in early medieval India. He is author of *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India* (2004). He has also co-authored, with Ronald Inden and Jonathan Walters, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practice in South Asia* (2000), and edited *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia* (1999).

SEBASTIAN R. PRANGE currently holds the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Department of History, University of British Columbia. He obtained his doctorate from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. His research centres on the economic and social organization of Muslim trading communities on the Malabar Coast. This research is an expression of his wider interest in the formation of commercial and religious networks in the pre-modern Indian Ocean.

TORSTEN TSCHACHER is lecturer at the Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures at Heidelberg University. His research focuses on the history and religiosity of Tamil-speaking Muslim communities, utilizing textual as well as anthropological approaches. His recent publications include "Tamil", in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, edited by Kees Versteegh, Vol. 4 (2008) and "Zwischen 'Rasse' und Religion: Debatten über Islam and Ethnizität unter tamilischen Muslimen in Singapur", in

Religionsinterne Kritik und religiöser Pluralismus im gegenwärtigen Südostasien, edited by Manfred Hutter (2008).

RONIT RICCI received an MA in Indian Languages and Literatures from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan. She is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

JAN VAN DER PUTTEN is Associate Professor at the Department of Malay Studies of the National University of Singapore, where he teaches Malay Literature. His research interests lie in traditional Malay writing as well as in modern Malay media. His recent publications include: "Between Iron Formalism and Playful Relativism: Five recent studies in Malay writing", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 147–63, and "Malay Cosmopolitan Activism in Post-War Singapore" (co-authored with T.P. Barnard), in *Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, edited by Michael D. Barr and Carl A. Trocki (2008).

KEES VAN DIJK was a researcher at the KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies from 1968 to 2007. He holds a chair as Professor of the history of Islam in Indonesia at Leiden University since 1985. He studied Non-Western Sociology at Leiden University, and during his study specialized in Indonesian Studies. He obtained his PhD at Leiden University in 1981 with a thesis entitled *Rebellion under the banner of Islam: the Darul Islam in Indonesia* (1991). Among his publications are: *A Country in Despair: Indonesia between 1997 and 2000* (2001) and *The Netherlands Indies and the Great War, 1914–1918* (2007).

IQBAL SINGH SEVEA is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Contemporary Islam Program at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Dr Sevea received his doctorate from the University of Oxford and a Masters in African and Asian History from the School of Oriental and African Studies. His research interests include modern Islamic thought, political Islam, and Muslim networks between South and Southeast Asia. He is currently working on a book tracing the engagement of South Asian Muslim intellectuals with trends in modern political thought.

TERENJIT SEVEA is a PhD Candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research interests include nineteenth century South and Southeast

Asian peripatetic Sufis, and Muslim South and Southeast Asian intellectual connections. His articles include "Islamist Questioning and Colonialism: Toward an Understanding of the Islamist Oeuvre", *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7, and "Islamist' Intellectual Space: 'True Islam' and the Ummah in the East", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 35, no. 4-5. He is the co-editor of a forthcoming volume entitled *Sufi Movements in Contemporary Islam*.

PETER RIDDELL is Professorial Dean of the BCV Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths in Melbourne. He has previously taught at the Australian National University, the Institut Pertanian Bogor, the London School of Oriental and African Studies and the London School of Theology. His books include: *Transferring a Tradition* (1990), *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World* (2001), and *Christians and Muslims* (2004).

FARISH A. NOOR is presently Senior Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University Singapore; and affiliated professor at Universitas Muhamadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia. He has been researching the phenomenon of transnational religious networks for the past seven years while based at the Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin and the Freie University of Berlin.

ROBERT ROZEHNAL is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion Studies at Lehigh University (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA). He holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from Duke University, and an MA in South Asian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan* (2007).

INTRODUCTION
Issues and Ideologies in the Study of Regional Muslim Cultures

R. Michael Feener

Over the past fourteen centuries the expansion of Islam has transformed societies all across Asia and Africa, producing a civilization of great complexity and internal diversity. Despite the demographic realities of the modern Muslim world, however, the academic study of Islam remains plagued by a resilient bias privileging the Middle East not only as "central" but also as normative. Such orientations to the study of Islamic civilization have had the unfortunate effect of implicitly reducing other regions (even those in large majority populations that have been Muslim for centuries) to the status of peripheries. While there are arguable cases to be made for the special position of the Arab world in particular — including the position of Arabic as a primary language of Islamic scripture and religious scholarship, as well as the importance of the pilgrimage to Mecca as a pillar of ritual observance — this can be and has been overstated. This persistence of what may be termed an "Arabist bias" has thus impaired understandings of the histories of Muslim societies outside the Middle East and produced distorted images of Islam in the contemporary world.

At the turn of the twenty-first century there are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide, with most of the major population centres located in Asia and the top five largest Muslim national populations located outside of the Arab Middle East.[1] Today nearly 60 per cent of the Muslims living in the world do so in Asia. By comparison, the combined populations of all of the Arabic-speaking Muslim nations of the Middle East add up to less than 20 per cent of today's global *umma*. A demographer's visual mapping of today's Muslim populations on a geographic model would then place the "centre of gravity" of the Muslim world somewhere between Sukkur and Nawabshah along the banks of the Indus River.[2]

Despite this, scholars focusing on studies of Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia continue to struggle against the inertia of dominant biases

that relegate their investigations to the margins of Islamic Studies. Richard M. Eaton, among others, has earlier called attention to the imperatives that he saw implied by such a view of the Muslim world, stressing that "the question here is not whether South Asia can be considered as any sort of periphery, but rather how this region became a cultural and demographic epicentre for the entire Muslim world".[3] Of course, however, the making of South Asia as an "epicentre" of the Muslim world is facilitated not only by its own large Muslim populations, but also by the demographic weight of major Muslim concentrations further east, particularly those of the Malay world. Taking this into account, the intent of this volume is not simply one of not placing South Asia at a newly-reconceptualized "centre" and thus implicitly entailing the creation of new peripheries, but rather attempting to explore the internal connections, comparisons, and contrasts between Muslim cultures in South and Southeast Asia.

Adopting this dynamic, transregional perspective on the Islamic world could have stimulating and wide-reaching implications for future studies, particularly as researchers explore aspects of globalization and "south-south" dynamics between contemporary Muslim societies. Such work, however, must avoid the temptation to simply substitute new "Asian-oriented" proclivities and prejudices for older, Middle Eastern ones. Rather, by its very nature, the attempt to view the connections between Muslim communities around the world must be one that engages dynamic, multidirectional phenomena, rather than falling back on to unreflexive nationalist historiographies and ethnic essentializations, or reifications of contemporary regional stereotypes retrojected to earlier historical periods. As Barbara Metcalf has remarked in connection with her own studies of the history of Islam in South Asia, "Nation, caste, language, and above all religion, are, in their politicised and enumerated form, contingent and recent. Indeed, it is the excavation of the contingent nature of such identities that is the work of critical scholarship."[4] That is, we must make it a point to challenge ourselves to think beyond the latent prejudices that inform popular assumptions about "origins", "Islamization", and "local cultures".

Given the degree to which we are all surrounded by such contemporary imaginings, we need to be extra vigilant and self-critical in developing ways of conceptualizing and commenting on the historical formations of Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia. This book seeks to address issues and ideological arguments that have compromised the success of earlier attempts to explore the connections, comparisons, and contrasts between historical expressions of Islam and Muslim culture in these two regions, and this volume as a whole presents a collection of new studies of these issues, initially presented

at a conference hosted by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore in June 2007. This conference brought together an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars working on various aspects of Islam in South and Southeast Asia to discuss these issues in a forum where each could benefit from the other's specialized knowledge.

Of course, this was not the first international conference that has attempted such work. In 1974, a workshop on "Islam in Southern Asia" was held in Heidelberg to sketch out the state of the field of Social Science research on Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia. The meeting was a landmark in bringing together scholars specializing in both these areas, but little was done by way of systematized comparison, or explicating historical linkages, and the resultant published volume contains only very short papers averaging three pages per participant, followed by transcripted minutes of the ensuing discussions. The aim of that work, as explained by conference convenor Dietmar Rothermund, was to stimulate social scientific work on "regional approach[es] to Islam as a way of life, a set of values, and a world of ideas".[5]

Over the three decades since then, debates on regional Islam have advanced considerably, particularly in anthropology, through the work of scholars such as Talal Asad, who has promoted conceptualizations of diverse Islamic traditions that strive towards coherence, if not uniformity, while simultaneously maintaining various degrees of particularism.[6] Taking into account such dynamics of the development of Islamic civilization on a broader scale, we start to see new ways of conceptualizing cultural patterning and modes of practice across diverse regions of the Muslim world. This volume brings together the work of specialists on Muslim societies of South and Southeast Asia, enabling us to compare notes on what has been done to date as a step towards closer collaboration in the development of theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches for the study of Islam as a global tradition. One of the areas that would appear to be fruitful for such comparative conversations is that of *Islamization*.

Diverse processes of Islamization have been at work across South and Southeast Asia for centuries, including both religious conversion and cultural transformation following the military conquest of agrarian states. However other modes have been arguably more influential for subsequent developments and seem to cry out as potential material for comparative studies of the histories of Islam in the two regions. For example, as an historian of Muslim Southeast Asia, I am particularly struck by some of the ways in which South Asianists have discussed the Islamization of the Malabar Coast.[7] These include various modes of Islamization following the trade routes across the Indian Ocean,

ranging from the conduct of commerce within common legal frameworks to patterns of socialization such as ritual participation and intermarriage.[8] These are precisely the issues that have long dominated discussions of the Islamization of Southeast Asia, but generally speaking, scholars working in this area have not fully engaged with studies of analogous developments in South Asia. Some Southeast Asianists have at times looked towards Malabar and other areas of South Asia for specific material on connections between the two regions — for example, in discussions of the architectural forms of mosques.[9] However, as yet, there has been no serious work done that discusses the historical dynamics of Islamization in South and Southeast Asia as part of interconnected processes of social transformation. Such an integrated approach to discussions of these developments could help us to overcome some of the major obstacles that have impeded cross-regional discussions of these two major areas of the Muslim world, including the still-dominant tendency to discuss issues of "influence" in terms of unidirectional flows from west to east.

For decades, processes of Islamization in Southeast Asia have been discussed in terms of "networks" of various kinds, particularly Muslim merchant diasporas and Sufi orders. Despite such talk of networks, however, the assumptions underlying most existing histories of Islamization unfortunately end up looking more like supply chains, with "Islam" as a commodity, that for some reason, always moves eastward towards apparently receptive markets in Southeast Asia with little or no discussion of what might have been carried in the other direction, or of the impact that such contacts and encounters might have had on Muslims living in South Asia or further west. Accordingly, debates on Islamization in Southeast Asia, at least, have been obsessed with "origins" and often preoccupied with identifying "the" source for the arrival in Southeast Asia, as if complex processes such as the creation of regional Muslim cultures worked in ways analogous to technology transfer. However, such "unitary" theories of Islamization are not only empirically unverifiable, but have often also allowed for too-easy incorporation into polemics of identity politics for various religious and ethnic groups in the modern period. These unwanted side effects of scholarship might be nipped in the bud, as it were, by more actively challenging stereotypical perceptions and developing more nuanced understandings of the historical formations of diverse Muslim cultures in Asia, as well as of their interactions with one another and the broader world.

Indeed, the long and complex histories of Islamization in both South and Southeast Asia present a rich heritage of layered changes along an array of often intersecting vectors, and there is still much that we have to

learn, particularly about the earlier periods. Recently, new materials are coming to light, including some that point toward revisions of our earlier understandings about the interconnections of the development of Islam in both these regions. For example some still preliminary observations at coastal sites in Aceh report the presence of early Muslim grave markers at Lamreh carved in a distinctive obelisk-like form (known as *plang pleng*) that bear possible southern Indian stylistic overtones. These are found in an archaeological context that also contains significant amounts of southern Indian red ware pottery. Similar markers are also found at Gampong Pande in Banda Aceh. Another early Islamic site, in the vicinity of Perlak, is known locally as Cot Meuligue, a name that may have been derived from the Tamil *malikai* ("palace", "mansion" or "temple").[10]

More established textual source bases for our knowledge of the early modern history of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago show even clearer evidence of close connections to centres of Muslim culture in South Asia and beyond. Indeed, in the sixteenth century, new arrivals to the Archipelago, such as the Portuguese traveller Tomé Pires, were struck by the strong presence in Malay ports of Muslim merchants "from different Moorish and Kling nations".[11] At that time new forms of Islamic art and culture were beginning to take root in Aceh, the royal forms of which (at least) were clearly influenced by models developed at the Mughal court in everything from landscaping to literary composition.[12] We can also trace more direct linkages in the field of Islamic religious scholarship at that time, and international trends in a number of fields known throughout the Muslim world that continued to be reflected in South and Southeast Asia through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — often facilitated by the movement of scholars from many different regional backgrounds back and forth between various parts of Asia and the Middle East.[13] Patterns of movement across various parts of the Muslim world were, however, significantly altered by the increasing intervention of European colonial powers over the course of this period; in the process, new kinds of connections were facilitated by structural changes of states and the introduction of new means of transportation and communication.[14] These include, for example, the establishment of regional centres of lithograph printing for texts in South Asia that catered to Southeast Asian Muslim markets. These new colonial connections between the two regions have also left their traces in patterns of local practice such as in Pariaman and Bengkulu on the west coast of Sumatra, where local observations of Ashura preserve elements first brought over by Sepoy soldiers staffing British pepper ports there.[15]

Further permutations of intra-Islamic relations across the eastern half of the Indian Ocean littoral have occurred over the course of the twentieth

and twenty-first centuries as post-colonial movements of goods, people, and ideas have facilitated transregional conversations on redefining Islam along a spectrum ranging from Sufism to Salafism, with many variations in between. Despite the existence of such dynamic modes of contemporary interaction between Muslims from these two regions, most previously existing scholarship on exchanges between South and Southeast Asia appears to maintain a unidirectional orientation. In my own searches in the secondary literature on Islam in South Asia, I have not yet turned up any sustained treatments of reciprocal influences coming from Southeast to South Asia. The overall impression that most scholarship to date tends to present, then, is one of Southeast Asia as a perpetual recipient of Muslim cultures from further west. However, when one is aware of the networks of various types that have historically linked Muslim communities in South and Southeast Asia, it would be almost impossible if all streams of influence flowed in the same direction. Although such a preconception is still prevalent among scholars — not to mention in popular perceptions — I am led to wonder if perhaps the issue is not that reciprocal influence did not exist, but simply that it has not been looked for. This in not a simple expression of wishful thinking, but a critique based upon my own experience of pursuing some analogous work in one of my own primary fields of research — that of historical connections between the Indonesian Archipelago and the Arabian Peninsula.

Before ever visiting that part of the Middle East, I had read much about the role of southern Arabia, and Wadi Hadhramaut in particular, in contributing to the development of Islamic culture in Southeast Asia. Upon arrival there, however, I found myself struck by the extent to which elements of Malay Muslim tradition had influenced diverse aspects of culture in this part of the Arabian Peninsula — including, but not limited, to dress, diet, and language. While large-scale migration between Southern Arabia and Southeast Asia is a relatively recent (late nineteenth- early twentieth-century) phenomenon, their connection on the more elite level of Islamic religious scholarship dates well before that. In searching through Arabic sources documenting such earlier connections, I was surprised to find texts, some dating as far back as the fourteenth century, in which not only were scholars from both regions engaged in the study of the same texts — but in which prominent Arab figures present themselves as the eager and appreciative students of Muslim scholars either hailing from, or long associated with, the Indonesian Archipelago.[16] This is information that considerably complicates stereotypical views of a unilinear transmission of Islam from west to east, and it was sitting in the pages of Arabic texts simply waiting for someone to look for it. This leads me to wonder if there aren't analogous materials

from South Asia that have managed to stay out of the scholarly spotlight thus far. It is hoped that the work presented in this volume will stimulate further work among scholars working in both South and Southeast Asia to explore the dynamics of multivectored interactions between these two large and important areas of the Muslim world.

Keeping an eye open for such data and investing some effort toward critically evaluating dominant preconceptions of Islamization patterns might not only turn up some heretofore unstudied sources, but also facilitate some new spaces for critical reflection. Envisioning cultural interactions between Muslim societies along multiple vectors can help us come to terms better with the internal complexities of the Muslim world in ways that facilitate new understandings of the interrelations of its various parts. One important benefit of such an approach can be in its challenges to the kind of lingering diffusionism that persists when one continues to privilege a Middle Eastern "centre" of the Muslim world. Moving beyond this to reframe our approach can help to open us up to more nuanced appreciations of Islam as a global civilization. The focus on complex and multivectored interactions, both historical and contemporary, between Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia, then, should not be simply about highlighting one alternative region of the Muslim world over another, but rather of reflecting upon demographic realities as a means of stimulating new ways of approaching the study of Muslim societies. Some analogous movements are already afoot among our colleagues who study "global Christianity", and we may have much to learn from their work in the future.

At present, however, this volume aims to present a stocktaking of this field of enquiry and to expand our knowledge of particular connections and cases of comparison and/or contrast. This is something undoubtedly in need of further development and the essays that have been prepared for this volume comprise some significant contributions towards this end. Work along these lines can help to expand the body of specialist studies that are still much needed to bring more material into consideration in the study of Muslim societies outside the Middle East. The respective specialized studies of Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia are already rich and complex fields in and of themselves, each with its own vast literatures and significant developments of method and analysis. Bringing these two scholarly communities into conversation through studies such as those published in this volume can help researchers in both fields of specialization to learn of, and be inspired by, discoveries and approaches being developed in neighbouring fields, as well as to warn us of possible pitfalls and dead ends that have cut off other experiments and efforts at interpretation.

This volume begins with an essay by Daud Ali that presents a critical overview of diverse historiographic trends in the study of Muslim societies of South and Southeast Asia. Beyond its rich survey of existing scholarship, his essay explores selected aspects of approaches from both of these fields that could be drawn upon to inform new approaches to understanding the development of Islamic traditions in transregional contexts. This is followed by a richly documented account of parallel processes of Islamization on the Malabar Coast and in the Indonesian Archipelago by Sebastian Prange. His analysis of primary source material there provides fresh insight into the dynamics of multidimensional Muslim networks criss-crossing the Indian Ocean in earlier periods. Torsten Tschacher's essay, which immediately follows it, further helps open up new possibilities for moving beyond simplistic and unproductive debates about the "origins" of Islam in Asia, by advocating a shift from models of linear transmission to those of "circulation". Such an approach can be useful in developing more integrated understandings of the contemporaneous development of related constellations of Arabic-based Shafi'i and Sufi vernacular traditions across the Indian Ocean littoral in the medieval and early modern periods.

Tschacher's essay draws in particular upon relatively understudied material from southern India in the form of Muslim Tamil textual traditions. Recent work by a new generation of scholars on such texts is beginning to revive, and more thoroughly pursue, earlier explorations of the historical relationships between Muslim societies in southern India and the Indonesian Archipelago.[17] Ronit Ricci's contribution to this volume in particular treats material from the religious and literary textual traditions connecting these two regions. There she provides an extended discussion of Javanese texts of *The Book of a Thousand Questions* as a manifestation of the complex cultural and literary currents involved in the ongoing development of vernacular Muslim cultures in both South and Southeast Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This period of the development of print culture in colonial contexts receives further treatment in Jan van der Putten's study of the intersections between text and performance in the production of *wayang Parsi* or *bangsawan* theatre. His depiction of the complex ways in which these forms of popular entertainment brought together strands of culture, commercial interests, and new technologies linking South and Southeast Asia, open a window on the complexity of connections between these two regions in the colonial period.

Kees van Dijk's chapter presents a very different aspect of how the mechanisms of European control framed dynamics of interaction between

Muslim communities under British and Dutch rule. Through his close examination of archival materials from the period of World War I, he presents a compelling picture of the ways in which an emerging system of modern geopolitics attempted to monitor and manipulate understandings of Islam both within and between Muslim communities in South and Southeast Asia.

The ongoing struggles over authoritative interpretations of Islam in the modern period are examined in subsequent chapters. Iqbal Singh Sevea discusses the ways in which the Ahmadiyya's aggressive engagement with print culture intensified and transformed patterns of Islamic textual transmission between South and Southeast Asia. Their attempts to promote Ahmadi visions of what constitutes "true Islam" were, however, fiercely contested by other Muslim groups who used the same new technologies and cultural strategies for their own ends. Terenjit Sevea's contribution to this volume provides a focused investigation of another set of modern voices of Islamic reform: those associated with the English-language periodical *Progressive Islam.* This publication featured the writings of prominent Muslim intellectuals and activists from both South and Southeast Asia, brought together in conversations on a renewal of global Islam to be pioneered by "the *umma* in the East".

Transregional dynamics of Islamic reform are also the subject of Peter Riddell's reflections in his essay on patterns of comparison and contrast in the careers of Southeast Asian Muslim activists over the seventeenth through to the twenty-first centuries. This *longue durée* overview helps to establish some broader frameworks for understanding contemporary developments at the intersections of global Islam and local contexts. While Riddell's essay concludes with a focus on a prominent figure in contemporary Malaysian Islamist politics, the two remaining chapters of this volume provide focused treatments of two explicitly apolitical Muslim movements stretching across Muslim South and Southeast Asia.

In both of these studies, attention is focused on the experiences of particular individuals involved in such groups and how they imagine the various ways in which their chosen confessional communities link together Muslims in both regions. Farish Noor does this through his relation and analyses of selected first-hand oral life narratives of members of the Tablighi Jama'at in contemporary Southeast Asia. Rob Rozehnal then provides rich observations on another contemporary transnational Muslim movement: the Chishti Sabiri Sufi order. His essay includes notes on the experience of Malaysian pilgrims to the shrine of Pakpattan Sharif in the Punjab as well as discussions of the ways in which print and electronic media facilitate other modes of transregional interaction between participants.

Together all these essays aim toward a critical re-evaluation of the dynamic interactions between Muslim communities in South and Southeast Asia to understand better both historic and contemporary formulations of Islam, and the formation of specific Muslim communities. In doing so the volume as a whole seeks to move beyond the dominant existing paradigms of transmission and diffusion that have resulted in overly-simplistic conceptions of Islamization depicting South and Southeast Asia as merely conduit and consumer, respectively. There is thus a clear need to move beyond untenable models of "core and periphery" — as well as scorecard-type approaches to issues of "influence" — in order to develop new orientations to the study of global Islam that will be more useful in developing nuanced understandings of the complex histories and contemporary manifestations of Islam in Asia.

Notes

1. Recent population data list the largest Muslim national populations as: Indonesia 182 million, Pakistan 134 million, India 121 million, Bangladesh 114 million, Nigeria 61 million, and Egypt 61 million. Malise Ruthven, with Azim Nanji, *Historical Atlas of Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). A collection of studies on various doctrinal, political, and demographic issues related to population issues in Muslim societies can be found in Gavin W. Jones and Mehtab S. Karim, eds. *Islam, the State, and Population* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005).
2. I would like to thank Gavin Jones for his help in calculating and plotting these demographics.
3. Richard M. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.
4. Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 197.
5. Dietmar Rothermund, ed., *Islam in Southern Asia: A Survey of Current Research* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975), p. vii.
6. Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University CCAS Occasional Papers, 1986), pp. 17–18.
7. This work, and its relevance for the study of multidimensional Muslim networks across the Indian Ocean is discussed in Sebastian Prange's contribution to this volume.
8. See, for example: André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).
9. See, for example Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 55–57.
10. E. Edwards McKinnon, personal communication, February 2009. See also E. Edwards McKinnon, "Indian and Indonesian Elements in Early North

Sumatra", in *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, edited by Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), pp. 22–37. I would like to thank Ronit Ricci for her help with identifying this Tamil term.

11. Armando Cortesão, ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515, and The Book of Francisco Rodrigues*, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944), I, p. 142.
12. Vladimir Braginsky, "Structure, Date and Sources of *Hikayat Aceh* Revisited: The Problem of Mughal-Malay Literary Ties", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 162, no. 4 (2006): 441–67.
13. The groundbreaking study of such movements from Southeast Asia has been: Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).
14. I have discussed these developments at greater length in R. Michael Feener, "New Networks and New Knowledge: Migration, Communication, and the Refiguration of Muslim Community in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 6, edited by Robert Hefner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
15. R. Michael Feener, "Muharram Observances in the History of Bengkulu", *Studia Islamika* 6, no. 2 (1999): 87–130.
16. An early example of this can be found in texts of Abdullah As'ad al-Yafi'i (d. 1367) described in R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, "Sufi Scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam", *Archipel* 70 (2005): 185–208. Later documentation of the role of Sufi scholars associated with the Indonesian Archipelago as teachers to Arab pupils can be found, for example, in the case of 'Abd al-Samad b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jawi (a.k.a. 'al-Palimbani'), who taught Ghazali's *'Ihya' 'ulum al-din* to the Yemeni sayyid scholar 'Abd al-Rahman b. Sulayman al-Ahdal (d. 1835). Al-Ahdal reports this himself in his biographical collection entitled: *al-Nafas al-Yamani wa'l-ruh al-rahayni fi ijazat al-qudat bani'l-Shawkani* (Sana'a: Markaz al-dirasat wa'l-abhath al-Yamaniyya, 1979), pp. 138–43.
17. The pioneering work in this direction was undertaken a century ago by Ph. S. van Ronkel. See, for example, his: "Het Tamil-element in het Maleisch", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 45 (1902): 97–119; "Tamilwoorden in Maleisch gewaad", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 46 (1903): 532–57; "Maleisch labai, een Moslimsch-Indische term", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 56 (1914): 137–41; "A Tamil Malay Manuscript," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 85 (1922): 29–35.

1

CONNECTED HISTORIES? Regional Historiography and Theories of Cultural Contact between Early South and Southeast Asia

Daud Ali

This chapter will present a general overview of early South and Southeast Asian historiographies, with a particular reference to the problem of cultural interaction between the regions across the boundaries of the "classical" and "early modern" periods. It will attempt to trace the existing paradigms of interaction against the more general contexts of social history and chronology developed in the historiographies of these regions, noting similarities and differences along the way. The chapter reviews the state of play in these fields regarding this problem, emphasizing the immense possibilities that the emphasis on "networks" and "connective histories" has opened in the last two decades, and continues to offer in both fields for rethinking relations between the regions.

THEMES AND EPOCHS IN PRE-COLONIAL SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY

Colonial scholars and administrators in the latter half of the nineteenth century were the first to subject South Asia to modern historicist scrutiny. Using coins, inscriptions, and chronicles, they determined the dates and identities

of numerous kings and dynasties within a scrupulously empiricist framework. With the widespread rise of nationalist sentiment from the 1930s, South Asian scholars began to write about their own past. However, although they began working on new interpretations, these for the most part merely extended the empirical horizons of colonialist historiography. Such nationalist scholarship lasted well into the 1950s, producing some of the subcontinent's most learned and talented historians. Their particular configurations of colonial and early nationalist historiography of South Asia have proved immensely consequential for subsequent generations of historians.[1] Not only did this historiography value certain types of evidence, particularly Indic language epigraphy, Persian chronicles, and archaeology (while at the same time devaluing others such as literature and religous texts), but it also set some of the enduring thematic and topical parameters that have shaped the course of the field. The initial focus was on the careers and personalities of rulers, or the genius of races as the key causitive forces in history, but eventually dynastic history became the dominant mode of writing about the past.

To make sense of the myriad dynasties and lineages discovered in the sources, historians made use of epochal and chronological divisions. Early on, Orientalists, company administrators, and historians had divided the past either into a civilizational "golden age" or to the apparently more descriptive division of "Hindu", "Muslim", and "British" periods. By the early decades of the twentieth century, both colonial and nationalist historians had begun to map the tripartite scheme of "ancient", "medieval", and "modern" onto the latter framework. The rise of nationalist sentiment meant that a number of new and complex ideological inflections came to bear on this periodization. Among these was a tendency to construct, drawing on earlier Orientalist scholarship, a "glorious age" which acted as an originary moment in historical narratives. While there were differences among writers as to what empire or subperiod should hold this honour (typically the Mauryan or Gupta empires), an inevitable corollary of this idea required a subsequent period of political, economic, and cultural decline. For most, the Turkic conquests and establishment of the Delhi Sultanate between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, seen in this historiography to herald a "Muslim" or "medieval" period, provided a convenient occasion for this decline. Indeed, most nationalist writers saw this as a "dark", "ominous", or at very best, a euphemistically "difficult" period in India's history. And even when, in post-independence India, religiously marked periods were finally abandoned for the apparently secular terminology of "ancient", "medieval", and "modern" in university history departments, chronological divisions ensured not only a persistent identification of "ancient" with "Hindu-Buddhist", and "medieval"

with "Muslim", but also a continued association of ancient India with Hindu glory and medieval India with Muslim decline.

The late 1950s and 1960s, however, saw the rise of social history, as historians turned to new sorts of evidence and new topics of historical research. The legal and documentary sections of inscriptions were carefully scrutinized for information on state institutions, political structures, revenue systems, and agrarian relations, while archaeology and numismatics were used to gauge levels of trade and economic activity. Marxist scholars led the way in this innovation, proposing "mode of production" and "social formation" as analytical models.[2] Those working on earlier sources elaborated a theory of "Indian feudalism" — a feudalization of polity as a result of parcelling out imperial authority to subordinates through land grants — which was widely discussed, debated, and refined in historical journals during the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1970s, debates over "modes of production", partly driven by the moment of high theory in Marxist social science, climaxed in heated discussions regarding the relevance of "feudalism" to Indian history.[3] While these discussions remained inconclusive, by the time they had exhausted themselves in the 1980s, some fundamental assumptions of the feudalist model had been undermined. Romila Thapar's revisionist interpretation of the structure of the Mauryan state, for example, made clear that the idea of "feudal fragmentation" was problematic at best.[4]

Historians began to introduce new methodologies and theories inspired as much by anthropology and sociology as by Marxist frameworks. While the central concern of this literature remained an analysis of the state, historical focus shifted from "state and society" to "state *formation*". The rise of states in the early historic Gangetic plain formed the subject of an important monograph.[5] Anthropological models were introduced to explain the apparent lack of a centralized bureaucratic structure in early states as imagined by colonialist and nationalist scholarship. In South India, Burton Stein drew on Aidan Southall's study of acephelous societies in Africa to propose a "segmentary model" for the Chola empire, and Nicholas Dirks explored the changing role of kingship and caste as the "little kingdom" of the *ancien regime* was gradually hollowed out by the colonial regime.[6] By the end of the 1980s, however, the dominant approach to the state in medieval historiography, forwarded by B.D. Chattopadhyaya and Hermann Kulke, came to be known as the "integrative" or "processual" model.[7] It stressed agrarian expansion, urban transformation, localization, and regional state formation as *productive* rather than regressive, fragmenting developments during the putative period of "Indian feudalism". The "early state" in these formulations was seen neither as a pre-given entity as in nationalist scholarship, nor as

a fragmented polity as in feudalist historiography, but instead as having developed in a "continuous process from below".[8]

The fallout of the historiographical foment beginning in the 1960s was to place economy and society (rather than dynastic- or personality-based narratives) firmly at the centre of historical concern. The structure, organization, and formation of the regional state were henceforth topics of intrinsic and enduring interest. The turn to this sort of social history weakened the established periodization. The religious associations often closely imbricated with the framework of "ancient", "medieval", and "modern" were thus called into question,[9] as narratives of social formation, state typology, and mode of production failed to align neatly with these divisions. Preoccupations with a golden age of political unity and economic prosperity — usually associated with the ancient empires — were largely abandoned.[10] Chattopadhyaya's work influentially enunciated a refined periodization — that of "early medieval" India, which, unlike earlier applications of the "medieval", emerged only after sustained consideration of actual social, economic, and political developments.[11]

Later "medieval" history in South Asia, on the other hand, experienced even greater change. The Mughal empire had surely formed the most active field of research in pre-colonial Indian history since its inception. It was endowed with colonialist and nationalist histories, and from the 1960s, with a prolific tradition of Marxist historiography developed at Aligarh Muslim University.[12] By the 1980s, however, enough research had accumulated on the regional dynamics of the Mughal empire to complicate the "military-fiscalist" model of the Aligarh school. Building on these critiques, as well as on emergent scholarship that emphasized South Asian mercantile linkages in the Indian Ocean from the 1500s, calls arose for greater understanding of shared historical trajectories of the Mughal empire with its Safavid and Ottoman neighbours, and a number of scholars sought to place the Mughal empire within a more global and transregional framework. These were accompanied by vigorous reinterpretation of the eighteenth century (the last century of Mughal rule), which posited dynamic rather than failing regional economies across northern and central India.[13]

These developments in Mughal history, combined with a rise in the field of Indian Ocean studies and new historiographies of South India came together unevenly, but perhaps fortuitously, to create what has now been widely called an "early modern" period of Indian history. The most salient features of this historiography have been to view India from the sixteenth century not only within the world of the Indian Ocean and greater "Eurasia", but also within a global historical paradigm. For while the category of medieval has gradually

been evacuated of any definitive substance in most national historiographies in favour of a sort of cacophony of regional isolates, simply holding the fort until the cavalry arrives, the "early modern", on the other hand, has been an epoch of bold attributes. Its well-known features include the widespread existence of global trade markets, the rise to power of merchant capitalists distinguished from older land-based nobilities, partly bureaucratized and centralized monarchic states with large armies that made use of firearms, and finally, a series of cultural developments anticipating "modernity". While there has been a recognition that not all of these features apply to South Asia, and even critiques of the overall model of "early modern",[14] it has nevertheless gained a surprisingly tenacious currency among historians, particularly in studies of the regions at the periphery of, or beyond, the Mughal empire. As might be expected, the concept of "early modern" has also often been invested with a heavy sense of teleology. Given the colonial arguments for the exogenous origins of historical change in South Asia, it has been in vogue to argue that various elements of "modernity" are to be found in "indigenous" cultural forms between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.[15]

The historiography of Southeast Asia in the pre-colonial period bears some obvious similarities with the South Asian case. Early colonial scholarship in Southeast Asia was also responsible for the founding of modern academic disciplines and orientations, making huge advances in epigraphical, textual, and archaeological studies. This scholarship mostly focused on the reconstruction of dynastic history, and was also often characterized by essentialisms typical of "civilizational" discourse.[16] In the case of Southeast Asian historiography, however, this took the form of assigning the agency for historical change and civilizational development to the contiguous civilizational regions of India and China, what Hermann Kulke, building on the words of Georges Coedès, called "transplantation theory".[17] Yet with the rise of nationalist and anti-colonialist sentiment in the region, historians in Southeast Asia from the 1950s tended to reverse these assumptions, writing nationalist histories within the framework of various post-colonial political entities.[18] Turning away from the theory of external civilizational agency, they instead championed various forms of regional and national autonomy. If scholars such as Coedès had emphasized Southeast Asia as a congeries of variously derivative civilizations, the work of O.W. Wolters, drawing on neglected scholars such as Paul Mus and J.C. van Leur, focused attention away from external origins to argue that much of Southeast Asian art and architecture revealed quintessentially indigenous conceptions of sanctity.[19]

Southeast Asian historiography also witnessed a turn towards the state as an object of sociological scrutiny from the 1960s. Marx's theory of the

Asiatic Mode of Production and the related concept of the "hydraulic state" forwarded by Karl Wittfogel in the 1950s were initial inspirations.[20] These studies were quickly joined and overtaken by explicitly non-Marxist, Weberian, and anthropological theories of the state which sought to break the hold of the relatively ahistorical frameworks of Marx and Wittfogel.[21] These included O.W. Wolters' theory of the "mandala" and Stanley Tambaiah's "galactic polity", both of which posited a multinodal political structure in which the "centre" exercised only ritual authority outside of its immediate core, where chieftains and lesser kings often asserted autonomy.[22] Related was Clifford Geertz's theory of the *negara*, or "theatre state", where the ruler's authority even at the centre of the state was deemed ritual, with pragmatic aspects of rule buried far below in local structures.[23] In Geertz's formulation, the nineteenth-century Balinese elite were more concerned about ritual potency than economic power. These theories, as a number of commentators have pointed out, though couched in the apparently relativist language of post-war ethnography, tended to reinforce older Orientalist and colonialist ideas of civilizational stasis and exotic uniqueness.[24] Recently, a more historically-informed anthropology of the early state in Southeast Asia has emphasized that gender and kinship dynamics were highly complex agencies often crucial in the formation of states throughout the history of Southeast Asia.[25]

Interpretations of the state in early Southeast Asia, despite the reduced profile of Marxist historiography and the lack of a strong "feudalist" thesis, share strikingly similar contours to that of South Asia — beginning with the dynastic history of the colonial and early nationalist periods, followed by a period of Marxist modelling, before the rise and dominance of anthropological and Weberian theories. Indeed, there have been occasional but persistent exchanges of ideas between the two fields — where conferences brought scholars together to think collectively and bibliographies routinely contained key articles and monographs from each other's areas.[26] Save the vexed problem of "contact" and "influence" which we shall take up in the second half of this chapter, these scholarly interactions operated under what we would recognize as "comparative" history. After a hiatus of interaction (largely due to declining interest in the early periods of history in these regions) there has been a recent renewal of enthusiasm in rehabilitating these exchanges.

Yet taken as a whole, the historiography of pre-colonial Southeast Asia has differed from that of South Asia in a number of crucial respects. First, there has been a strong "regional" identity forwarded by the discipline. The idea of Southeast Asia, like many world regions current in academic Western disciplines, has its origin in the process of decolonization and the rise of the United States as a major imperial power from the 1950s. And it may be true,

as Michael Aung-Thwin observed, that students from individual countries have come to think of Southeast Asia as a region only after visiting the West or through exposure to university training.[27] Few, if any, universities in the region organize their curriculum under the rubric. Academic disciplines, however, particularly in the United States, have been overtly (perhaps even exceptionally) preoccupied with "defining the region". This preoccupation, iterated by scholarly interventions in the 1960s[28] functioned in part as a rationale for funding within the burgeoning "area studies" paradigm in the United States.[29] Southeast Asian studies in this academic context was crucially concerned in differentiating itself from both South Asian and East Asian area studies. The heights of this self-justificatory discourse did not go unnoticed, with some historians arguing that the region was largely a "contrived" concept reified by educational institutions.[30] Despite such scepticism, the idea of Southeast Asia continues to have an intellectual hold on historians. There are perennial calls for the distinctiveness and unity of the region on the basis of shared attributes of religion, gender, and geography, sometimes in the name of fending off the ideas of "Greater India" or "Greater China" (or some combination of the two, Indo-China), on the one hand, and atomized, autonomous national histories, on the other, and sometimes to make substantive arguments about particular historical trajectories.

If we turn to the historiography of South Asia, it is immediately apparent that the regional idea is strikingly faint by comparison. While the concept has a similar political genealogy through post-war decolonization, its currency in the historiography, both "within" and "beyond" the region, is notably different. The term has little or no academic presence in the nation-based educational institutions within the subcontinent, and although (expectedly) it forms the nomenclature of European and American centres of study, it often seems to be used euphemistically to avoid criticism of being "India-centric". In academic practice, however, it has meant very little, as scholars focusing entirely on India represent themselves as "South Asianists" without feeling any need to treat the history of countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. This has been justified to some degree by the geographical, economic, and political dominance of the subcontinental land mass and its political configurations within the subcontinental region (including the modern nation of India), as well as the fact that "British India" included modern-day Bangladesh and Pakistan. It has also been argued that the term "India" may denote less the modern state than a historical-cultural zone linked to pre-colonial terms such as "al-Hind" which referred to the subcontinent as a whole. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine discussing pre-colonial subcontinental history and historiography of any part or region of South Asia under any other rubric besides "India".[31]

Having said this, and also noting that the dominance of "India" within pre-colonial historiography is surely due in part to academic convention, we find it is also true that a continued conflation of such scholarly convention with modern political reality demonstrates the hold that nationalism has had on the region's historiographical imagination. Perhaps ironically, it is Indian Ocean studies, with its emphasis on the integrating factor of sea trade, that has most helped to redraw some of the boundaries of geohistorical enquiry in South Asian history.

Another significant point of difference between South and Southeast Asian historiographies is the related topic of periodization and chronology. Among colonial-era scholars down to the 1950s, the dominant epochal chronology for many (but not all) individual countries, colonies, and subregions of Southeast Asia (as well as the region as a whole) divided time into a "pre-European" period, sometimes glossed as "Indic" or "Hindu", followed by a "European" or a "Muslim and European" epoch, with the dividing line being somewhere around the fourteenth-fifteenth century.[32] From the 1970s, with the calls to move towards long-term, autonomous processes in Southeast Asian history, historians set out terms like "classical", "old", or, perhaps most enduringly, "early", Southeast Asia, to describe the great dynastic empires of Pagan, Da Viet, Sukhothai, Angkor, Srivijaya, and Majapahit.[33] While some of this scholarship may have, in the manner of Coedès himself, shared vague resonances with the "golden" or "classical" age discourses in Indian historiography, the "post-classical" period was not regarded as an unmitigated "decline into the medieval" as in South Asia, but instead as a time which witnessed a series of variable, but progressive economic and social developments.

By the 1980s, this period, as in South Asian historiography, had come to be called "early modern" with widespread currency.[34] The most influential theories in the "early modern" historiography of Southeast Asia have been those of Anthony Reid and Victor Lieberman. In an explicit invocation of Fernand Braudel's work on the Mediterranean, Anthony Reid offered an eloquent vision of the *longue durée* of Southeast Asian history — arguing that the expansion of Mediterranean and Chinese trade through the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia created unprecedented economic prosperity, fostered the development of more centralized and rationalized states with bureaucratic elements and the limited use of firearms, and gave birth to a new cultural cosmopolitanism, as the integrative religious traditions of Islam, Christianity, and Theravada Buddhism spread throughout the region.[35] This synergy, was largely exhausted by the end of the seventeenth century, with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The once symbiotic relations between international

trade, scriptural religion, and powerful centralized monarchies were disrupted and Southeast Asia's "Age of Commerce" had come to an end. While Reid's work was widely acknowledged as both groundbreaking and invigorating for incipient "early modernists", its emphasis on sea trade as the most important dynamic force in Southeast Asian history, assumptions about the geographic coherence of Southeast Asia during different time periods, and the idea of a shared chronological trajectory for different regions, not to mention the more recent critique of the Mediterranean analogy itself, have all been points of criticism.[36] As Victor Lieberman pointed out in his own attempt at a *longue durée* history of Southeast Asia, Reid's thesis came close to reviving the older theory of regional inertia, where external factors remained the primary motor of change in Southeast Asia.[37] Lieberman sought to redress such tendencies by placing archipelagic maritime trade against a number of other dynamics such as local factors that influenced long term historical change. Accelerated socio-political integration, firearms-based warfare, religious textuality, and international material and cultural exchanges are thus not reduced to effects of maritime commerce, but are seen as formative developments in their own right, which, taken together, suggest "strange parallels" between geographically disparate regions in Europe and Asia. As Lieberman sought to emphasize "internal" processes as motors for historical change, he also took an explicitly *longue durée* approach towards the "classical", pre-fifteenth century empires of the mainland, arguing that as "charter" states, they initiated key economic, cultural, political, and demographic changes which were further transformed from the fifteenth century.[38]

In contextualizing the "early modern" in Southeast Asia against the backdrop of comparative global history, early modern historians such as Lieberman and Reid have implicitly, if inevitably, been drawn into wider debates. The drive by comparativists to synchronize the rise of the early modern world has naturally raised questions not only as to what features constitute the category "early modern"[39] and what regions at what times qualify for the accolade, but to what extent pre-modern economies were globally integrated enough to speak of shared world historical trajectories. Much of this work is haunted by an older debate about factors explaining the "rise of the West". Global historians have not so much abandoned this problem as developed more sophisticated and historically contingent answers in place of older arguments about cultural superiority.[40] The concept of a global "early modernity" has been integral to this historiography as providing a global field of play for historically contingent arguments. But if strong historical teleologies had informed earlier narratives in the genre, it is perhaps not surprising that early modernists and comparative global historians often seem to be following

these very scripts for regions such as South and Southeast Asia, ticking the boxes and filling in the blanks. "Early Modern" South Asia has not, to date, had the benefit of quite such a robust or ambitious "incorporation" into comparative and global history — early modern historians have sometimes made idiosyncratic and nationalist arguments that India had its "own" early modernity. Indeed, some of its leading historians have remained sceptical of the methods of "comparative history".[41]

More recently, historians have proposed what has been called "connected" or "connective" history in lieu of the comparativist paradigm. As understood by Subrahmanyam and Lieberman "connected history" seeks to explore the linkages and contacts between geographically separated regions rather than searching for structural similarities and developmental convergences.[42] They contend that apparently discrete and natural entities which organize our geopolitical thinking today were in the early modern world neither as natural nor discrete as modern ideologies would have us believe, and instead reveal an uneven, but ceaseless "flow" of people, ideas, and materials across the globe. Such a perspective, which has gained an initial, but considerable, momentum in South Asian historiography, partly due to the recent emphasis on itinerancy, mobility, and movement as themes in the field,[43] is at once a more familiar, but also differently inflected, approach in Southeast Asian historiography, where issues such as population movement, diasporic hybridity, and external influence have often been celebrated features of the region's historiographical identity. But as we shall see, it is precisely this idea of a regional identity which may in part obscure connections rather than illuminate them.

THEORIES OF CONTACT BETWEEN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Theories on the relations between South and Southeast Asia have been as old as the field of Southeast Asian history itself. Colonial historians, who from the outset had deemed India an older and superior civilization, thus perhaps naturally understood Southeast Asian civilization as somehow derivative when evidence of cultural interaction was discovered. Such conceptions left an enduring legacy on the region's subsequent historiography, as the question of the modes, character, and extent of Indic "influence", and the measuring of relative agency between "Indic" and "local" initiatives, have been enduring problems for early Southeast Asian historiography.[44]

Before we survey this historiography in more detail, it should be noted that in comparing the fields of South and Southeast Asian studies, there is an obvious imbalance in preoccupations with external "contact". To wit, the

question of "external influence", however theorized, has dominated the field of Southeast Asian studies in a way that it simply has not in South Asian historiography. The reasons for this are not as obvious as they might seem. While the geographical and ecological setting of peninsular and archipelagic Southeast Asia is usually adduced as reason enough for the enduring presence of "external influence", what is remarkable is the fact that issues of "external influence", however conceived, have tended to be *bracketed out* of South Asian history, save, of course, the highly overworked "invasion" theory of Islam. Yet, as André Wink has pointed out, movements through the north-western corridors, which connect the South Asian subcontinent with Central Asia (to name one major route of human and material circulation), have been active from the very earliest periods of subcontinental history, and have often been formative and decisive ones.[45] Putting aside the now contentious theory of the "Aryan invasion", we need look no further than the early centuries of the Common Era, when, at the hands not of "Indian", but Central Asian groups such as the Shakas and Kushanas, Sanskrit was first made into a public diplomatic-cum-poetic language at Indian courts. In fact, it may be plausibly argued that during the early centuries of the Common Era, large parts of northern and western India shared as much, if not more, in their aspirations, material culture, and imperial traditions, with Sasanid Central Asia than with the southern and eastern reaches of the subcontinent. Yet, early Indian historians have been slow to recognize the full implications of such geographical alignments. This leads on to an important point when speaking about pre-modern cultural interactions, that the ways we conceptualize these often has as much to do with the "onward historical developments" which culminated in the formation of modern nationalism as with the cultural, economic, and political flows which traversed the pre-colonial world. We shall see below that recent scholarship has suggested that much can be gained by relinquishing established nationalist and regional frameworks.

The modern discovery of Sanskrit inscriptions and Hindu-style architecture in Southeast Asia gave rise to the idea that the region had been the destination of adventurous Indian princes who subjugated uncivilized tribes who inhabited these regions. By the 1940s, Indian nationalists with characteristic alacrity availed themselves of the chance to suggest the implicit notion that India, like Europe, had once had its own global empire in hoary antiquity.[46] The idea of "Hindu colonies in the Far East", however, did not survive the realities of decolonization for very long. It was soon abandoned for more complex theories which dominated the field of Southeast Asian studies for much of the post-war era. Importantly, it was not Indianists, but historians of Southeast Asia, who developed many of these later theories.

Ancient and medieval Indian history in the 1950s and 1960s was developing its models of feudalistic, closed, land-based economies built upon self-sufficient villages, and were at best indifferent to the high nationalist ambitions for a colonizing antiquity.

With the gradual collapse of colonial empires and the rise of nationalist assertion in Southeast Asia, the concepts of "Greater India" and "Hindu colonies" were deemed outmoded vestiges of a colonial mindset.[47] European historians instead forwarded the theory of "Indianization" as an alternative, debates around which raged for nearly three decades. Perhaps its most well-known proponent was the historian and epigrapher Georges Coedès, who rejected the notion that Southeast Asia was colonized by Hindu kings (by this time dubbed the "*kshatriya*" thesis) in favour of the role of *brahmin* advisors, ritual specialists, and merchants, who "transplanted" Indic civilization in the region (the so-called "*brahmin*" and "*vaishya*" theories).[48] Though Ian Mabbett in an important review of the problem in 1977 rightly challenged assumptions about the roles that *brahmins*, merchants and warriors as social categories played in these theories, arguing instead for a more complex combination of social vectors as agents of change — this did not alter the basic conclusion of this debate, that the process of "Indianization" was not effected through political dominion, but through the interactions between South Asian intellectuals, merchants, and ritual specialists, and local Southeast Asian elites. It became widely accepted that cultural contact probably followed commercial interaction between South India and Southeast Asia, which was in turn connected to wider trade networks in the Indian Ocean. What has been a matter of debate, on the other hand, and is far more difficult to decide, is the relative agency that various parties exercised in the process of cultural transmission.

This pointed to a relatively distinct, but far more significant issue, noted by Mabbett himself: the question not so much of *how* Indian influence arrived in Southeast Asia, but *how far* its influence came to dominate the culture of the region.[49] This problem was, of course, at the centre of the thesis of "Indianization". Implicit within this theory was the idea of two interacting agencies, one "Indian" and the other "indigenous". During the 1950s and 1960s, a need for defining a distinct "identity" for Southeast Asia grew increasingly urgent. Even Coedès himself had admitted to a "cultural unity" for the entire region which could be separated out from Indian influence.[50] As the historiography developed, these distinct features came to include, among other things, the relatively prominent status of women and ancestor worship. Soon enough, however, many scholars found Coedès' theory of Indianization too "Indo-centric" a framework. Critics argued that the theory

of Indianization, with its assumption of the transplantation of superior and dynamic Indian ideas on a culturally coherent, but relatively inert, local culture, was untenable and undermining.

The resulting scholarly trend is perhaps best captured in the work of scholars such as J.G. De Casparis and O.W. Wolters who sought not so much to exclude Indic influences, as to show how local peoples had been able to absorb, translate, and recontexutalize such external elements for their own ends.[51] What "Indianization" actually facilitated was not making things "Indian", but the consolidation of already existing indigenous concepts and practices. Wolters, for example, argued that the Hindu *bhakti* cult was grafted onto the local cult of the "man of prowess", increasing his status into overlordship, and thereby effectively bringing "persisting indigenous beliefs into sharper focus".[52] Perhaps even more than the proponents of Indianization, this tradition of scholarship left an indelible mark on the field of Southeast Asian studies, most notably for its conscious embrace of new methods and materials, beyond the familiar Sanskrit inscriptions, and Hindu and Buddhist temples, which formed the cornerstone of Indianization theories.

Historians working on "state-formation" had perhaps inadvertently furthered this perspective. Drawing on revisionist historiography of the state (mentioned in the first half of this chapter) which reinterpreted early "empires" such as Funan, Chenla, and Srivijaya as "multi-centered political systems", as well as impressive advances in pre- and proto-historic archaeology which provided a better understanding of the evolution of local societies in the centuries leading up to Indian contact, historians came to see the moment of "Indianization" not as the birth of something fundamentally new, but the culmination of an ongoing and essentially local process. As Paul Wheatley commented, "it was in the pre- and protohistoric paramountcies that much of the dynamism of the so-called Hinduization process should be sought".[53] The influential reassessments of the nature and structure of early states by Kulke, Wolters, Stein and Tambaiah, among others, along with the emphasis on local, long term historical development in both South and Southeast Asian historiography, meant that some of the assumptions underlying the older paradigm of Indianization had to be reconsidered. As Kulke put it, as long as pre-Indianized Southeast Asia was viewed as a primitive region populated by small tribes and bands, and the early states, as fully-fledged empires and kingdoms, then "it was an obvious, if not the only rational conclusion to regard India as sole origin and transmitter of civilization to Southeast Asia and initiator of its history".[54] With these certainties undermined, new frameworks were required.

Kulke, drawing on his own extensive work on Orissa, suggested further the important point that the experience of local societies receiving impetus towards state-formation by "Indianizing" elites was not unique to Southeast Asia, but also applied to the eastern and southern regions of the South Asian subcontinent. The markers of what is called "Indianization" in the historiography of Southeast Asia — Sanskrit inscriptions, Hindu temples, social stratification, and the spread of intensive wet-rice agriculture — appeared simultaneously in various regions of South Asia at roughly the same time. Indeed, "the socio-political development of Eastern India during the first half of the first millennium AD … resembles in many respects the development in parts of Southeast Asia".[55] The ideology of kingship which emanated from the courts of Gupta empire found fertile ground in Southeast Asia for the same reasons as it did in eastern and southern India, suggesting a social "nearness" or convergence on both sides of the Bay of Bengal. The intellectuals and scribes who formed the conduits of Sanskrit *kavya* and the Pallava script to Indonesia in *c*. 400 CE were not the civilizing "emissaries" or agents of powerful South Indian kingdoms, but arrived with experience at nascently formed princely courts which shared similar backgrounds, and faced similar problems in establishing authority. This led Kulke to postulate a social "convergence" between the regions which made them part of the same historical development. Drawing on a seminal but neglected line of enquiry outlined by de Casparis in the early 1980s, in which he proposed in lieu of the theory of Indianization "a complicated network of relations, both between various parts of each of the two great regions and between the two regions themselves", Kulke suggested that once the regions were viewed in this manner, it was clear that Indian culture did not reach Southeast Asia through any moment of "transplantation", but through a continuous and complex set of networks of relations within and between the regions, by mutual processes which linked both sides of the Bay of Bengal.

The emphasis on networks also drew heavily from a vibrant historiography of "maritime Southeast Asia", which explored the world of Southeast Asian trade (and its links with South India) from early medieval times.[56] Maritime and Indian Ocean historians had long understood the coastal cities of the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia as key trading entrepôts linking China with the Islamic Mediterranean. But from the 1980s, historians began to gain a greater understanding of the evolution of these trading systems as complex, multi-circuited systems, linked with one another rather than simply "direct" conduits between the poles of supply and demand.[57] The implications of such observations for cultural exchange were considerable, suggesting multiple circuits of cultural exchange rather than the idea of unidirectional transmission.

This fit well with emphasis on "networks" of cultural exchange suggested by de Casparis and its potential was highlighted by Denys Lombard in his call for a study of "Chinese", "Muslim", and "Christian" networks.[58]

These extremely suggestive explorations, however, seem not to have been sufficiently developed to prevent the early modern historian Victor Lieberman, writing almost a decade later, from dividing Southeast Asian historiography into neatly separate "externalist" and "autonomous" camps.[59] Externalist historiography, according to Lieberman, with its colonial tendency of looking beyond the region for catalysts of historical change, was replaced with the equally flawed "autonomous" perspective, which, in its well-intentioned endeavour to emphasize "indigenous agency", posited an essentialized and ahistorical "deep" culture unique to the region, which remained the same through various cultural interactions — an interpretation which Lieberman perspicaciously notes, had the unwitting effect of reinforcing earlier notions of regional inertia. Craig Reynolds has pointed out that historians of early Southeast Asia tend to discuss cultural interaction using "stratigraphic" metaphors.[60] Beneath the "sediment" of various historical accretions, lay a foundational "bedrock" of indigenous culture, embodying the *echt* of Southeast Asia — what O.W. Wolters had called "the cultural matrix".[61] According to these scholars, the very foundations of the field seem to act as an irritant to more satisfying accounts of local development and transregional contact.

In his recent study of Sanskrit literary culture, Sheldon Pollock has launched a far more polemical argument against the "autonomous" historians as part of his theory of the much-discussed concept of cosmopolitanism. Pollock has developed an extended critique of what he labels the "civilizationalist indigenism" of Wolters and others. He suggests that the wish to interpret the persistence of indigenous ideas through the process of Indianization by Wolters and others is both empirically unjustified and theoretically misguided. Pollock asserts that as far as "the key conceptions that underwrote many Southeast Asian polities" such as universal sovereignty and *bhakti* are concerned, "there is a lot of Indian evidence but none from non-Indian Southeast Asia".[62] Pollock argues that "indigenist" theory is conceptually flawed in its false projection of some ahistorical and unitary essence back into history. In fact, he continues, "it is from the Sanskrit evidence that Wolters derives much of his interpretation of Southeast Asian kingship and political systems more generally."[63] Furthermore, Pollock argues Wolters' formulation presumes that a particular historical "thought-world" could exist somehow separated from the language in which it is embodied.[64]

Pollock provides his own account of this transformation, or "trans-culturation" as he calls it, in Southeast Asia. He notes that from about 300 CE

classical Sanskrit *kavya* or poetry, quite suddenly became the preferred medium for proclamatory political discourse and aesthetic representation in South and Southeast Asia, a dispensation that would last for nearly a millennium. This history is dramatically demonstrated by the rapid spread of Sanskrit in public inscriptions by the courts of these regions in the first half of the first millennium CE, culminating in what Pollock calls a "Sanskrit cosmopolis". A distinctive feature of this cultural-political formation, according to Pollock, was a tendency to relegate non-literary, everyday, and "documentary" discourse connected with quotidian rule to local languages, thereby emphasizing the universal and cosmopolitan status of Sanskrit, which was reserved for the diplomatic and rhetorical parts of inscriptions. At the evidentiary level, it turns out that Southeast Asia is central to Pollock's theory, as it is one of the few regions which seems to conform perfectly to his model of the Sanskrit cosmopolis.[65] For Southeast Asian historians, Pollock's contribution does not so much concern how Sanskritic culture came to the region, as its function and significance, particularly in relation to local culture, once established. Though this may seem to return to an older Indo-centrism, for Pollock, the adoption of Sanskrit by the courts of South and Southeast Asia did not represent a "Hinduization" or "Indianization" of these regions, but instead a participation in the cosmopolitan culture of Sanskrit itself — a world where claims to self-identifcation, representation, and sovereignty were articulated in a common poetic language. While Pollock's theory of the Sanskrit cosmopolis (and subsequent vernacular "literization") have added a crucial dimension to the discussion by considering several key attributes of Sanskritized polities hitherto neglected, his caricature of the "autonomous" position, indifference to the archaeological record which has proved so important to recent historians, and apparent neglect of the ideological substance, cultural practices, and socio-economic processes which "underwrote" the Sanskrit cosmopolis (save the countours of Sanskrit literariness itself) would together seem to limit the significance of his work for historians. The full implications of Pollock's theory have yet to be explored and may still help us reconceptualize the nature of linkages between South and Southeast Asia in ways perhaps consonant with Kulke's suggestive remarks.

The historian considering cultural contacts between South and Southeast Asia after the thirteenth century faces serious problems. Various historical developments in both South and Southeast Asia, well underway by this time (but hardly synchronized with one another), including the establishment of a Turkish Sultanate in Delhi, the decline of the great "Indic" empires in Southeast Asia, and the consolidation of Muslim-dominated trade networks in the Indian Ocean and Maritime Southeast Asia seem to have conspired to

make historians on both sides of the Bay of Bengal — for different reasons — disinclined to consider ongoing cultural contacts between the regions. For South Asian historians, the twilight of "Hindu India" and its influence on Southeast Asia closed the chapter on India's "colonies" abroad.[66] Since Islam was itself perceived as a "foreign" element in South Asia's cultural history, historians tended to ignore any continued role that South Asians as Muslims may have played in Southeast Asian history. In Southeast Asia, there has been a greater openness to acknowledging continuing contacts with India during this period, but at the same time, there has been, since at least the nineteenth century, a trend among some Southeast Asian Muslim societies themselves to emphasize the Arab origins of Islamic cultures in the region, often at the expense of South Asian mediations. This is justified at one level by evidence of significant Arab mercantile activity in the region from at least the eighth century, and diasporic residential trading communities, which were surely the first vectors of conversion, by the thirteenth. At the same time, this emphasis has paralleled some reformist trends among Muslims in the region who have preferred to emphasize originary links with the Arab world over local and South Asian linkages for ideological reasons.[67]

Perhaps the major paradigm of cultural transformation for this period in both South and Southeast Asian historiography has been "Islamization". The topic has given birth to a rich and extensive literature detailing the social contexts of "conversion", vectors of religious transmission, and modes and degrees of assimilation. If, in Kulke's terms, South and Southeast Asia shared a social "convergence" in the first millennium CE that facilitated the process of "Indianization" in both regions, the second millennium, particularly from the thirteenth century, witnessed a set of far more divergent trends across the Bay of Bengal which would make any theory of continuity strained at best. While India saw a sort of continuous political development of agrarian empires throughout the millennium, Southeast Asia, with the fall of the great agrarian empires of Angkor, Pagan, Sukhothai, and Majapahit, entered a period of differential and varied socio-political development, particularly in the archipelago, where small, independent coastal kingdoms, relying heavily on maritime trade, had already become the norm. It is these small trading enclaves, which by the thirteenth century were the homes of Muslim traders of diverse origins, that became the initial vectors of Islamic transformation. To be sure, parts of coastal India, most notably Gujarat, Malabar, and to a certain extent, the Konkan and Coramandel coasts, also had important ports for Indian Ocean trading networks, and in some cases hosted communities of resident Muslim traders attested from as early as the ninth century. But these ports existed at the periphery of comparatively large and populous

agricultural states. Indeed, the dominant vector of Islamization in South Asia occurred, at least in its initial stages, through the establishment of a powerful, land-based military sultanate composed of Turkish and Central Asian elites "superimposed" on the agrarian mosaic of northern India. So if *Sufism* has been recognized in both regions as the crucial factor of religious change, in South Asia its interaction with the state, the peasantry, and artisan classes has been emphasized, whereas in Southeast Asia, its influence has been measured against that of diasporic Muslim traders as conduits of religious change, mirroring earlier discussions about the relative importance of *brahmins* and *vaishyas* in the spread of Indian culture.[68] The current consensus in both regions suggests that religious change was a multifaceted and gradual process (with peaks of transformation much later than is often assumed) which should be conceived of in terms of being as much an "indigenization" or acculturation of Islam to local practice, as it was the transplantation of something entirely new and wholly transformative.[69]

These diverse historical trajectories, however, do not mean that there were not "connections" between the regions. In some senses, the very idea of Islamization has obstructed the exploration of these networks, because, as a paradigm, it would seem, by its very definition, to present itself as the interaction of a set of "transposable" religious practices and beliefs with a set of "local", rooted, "indigenous" ones. At one level, this may be justified as the success of Islam, like other world religious systems, was surely based upon its ideological mobility. But there has been a tendency to pose Islam as a universal or abstract entity superimposed on the local. And in the desire to demonstrate the hybridity of Southeast Asian Islam through the assertion of regional identity, the complex and mediated nature of Islamic transmission and networking has often been overlooked. This state of affairs recalls the historiography of "Indianization", which tended to assume a preformed Hinduized, or Sanskrit culture as the sole embodiment of what was authentically "Indian". The combination of both essentialisms working in their own fields has compounded the problem, and to some extent, created a sort of collective blindness.

The evidence suggests that people from South Asia played a persistent and continuous role in Muslim networks that circulated in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Archipelago. Indian trading networks in the Archipelago persisted even after the rise of "Muslim" dominance in maritime trade. Elizabeth Lambourn has demonstrated that Muslim tombstones from Sumatra, dated to the period of the Samudera-Pasai kingdom in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, contain titles, though in Arabic ("*nayna*", Tamil *nayanar*) that indicate South Indian Muslims playing an important role in Archipelagic

trade.[70] The trading enclaves associated with the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia which expanded across the archipelago from the fourteenth century were inhabited by remarkably diverse, even cosmopolitan, populations (without the apparent benefit of any "cosmopolitan literary culture" in Pollock's sense). By the sixteenth century, sources mention variously Chinese, Arabs, Malays, Javanese, Gujaratis, and Portugese. While these communities ebbed and flowed across time and region, it is clear that a substantial minority among them likely hailed from South Asia. Moreover, the ethnic Arabs in these enclaves very likely did not arrive directly from the Arab lands, but from other points along the trading circuits in the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka, Gujarat, and Malabar. Material goods, technical expertise, and even literary knowledge, continued to move between South and Southeast Asia.[71]

The turn to "circuits" and "networks" of goods, people, and ideas has helped to disaggregate accepted lines of transmission and stable regional boundaries, with salutary effects on more recent historiography. Indeed, if there is any cultural feature that might be seen to characterize the rise of the "early modern" world, as Subrahmanyam argued, it is surely a rapid increase in the nature and scale of movement across political and regional boundaries in a changed domain of global interaction.[72] It is within this paradigm that the role of South and Southeast Asian agents, in the ongoing links between these regions from the fourteenth century, may be fruitfully reassessed.

Notes

1. Discussed at length in Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1978), pp. 1–26; idem., *Early India: From Origins to AD 1300* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002), pp. 1–36; and Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).
2. D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1956); Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1963); R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965).
3. Harbans Mukhia, ed., *The Feudalism Debate* (Delhi: Manohar, 1999).
4. Romila Thapar, *The Mauryas Revisited* (Calcutta: Bagchi, 1987).
5. Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-first Millennium B.C. in the Ganga Valley* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984).
6. Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980); Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
7. Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); Hermann Kulke, "The Early and Imperial Kingdom: A Processural Model of Integrative State Formation in Early Medieval India",

in *The State in India 1000–1700*, edited by Hermann Kulke (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).

8. Hermann Kulke, A. Eschmann, and G.C. Tripathi, eds., *The Jagannatha Cult and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (Delhi: Manohar, 1978).
9. Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, and Bipin Chandra, *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969).
10. See Thapar, *Mauryas Revisited*, and David Lorenzen, "Historians and the Gupta Empire", in *Reappraising Gupta History: For S.R. Goyal*, edited by B.C. Chhabra et al. (Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1992), pp. 47–60.
11. Chattopadhyaya, *Making of Early Medieval India*.
12. Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*.
13. For a review and analysis of Mughal historiography that advances a critique of the military-fiscalist model of the Aligarh school with a call for opening up Mughal history to the wider fields of Ottoman and Safavid studies, see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Mughal State 1526–1750* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 1–71. On the historiography of Indian maritime trade during Mughal times, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Introduction", in *The World of the Indian Ocean Mercant, 1500–1800: Collected Essays of Ashin Das Gupta*, edited by Uma Das Gupta (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 1–13. For reviews of the debates on the eighteenth century, see Seema Alavi, "Introduction", *The Eighteenth Century in India*, edited by Seema Alavi (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1–56, and Peter J. Marshall, "Introduction", *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?*, edited by Peter J. Marshall (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 1–49.
14. See Jack Goldstone, "The Problem of the 'Early Modern' World", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41, no. 3 (1998): 249–84.
15. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Penumbral Visions: Making Polities in Early Modern South India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Velchuru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
16. For a fine example of this tradition, see Lawrence Palmer Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire* (Philadelphia: American Oriental Society, 1951).
17. Hermann Kulke, "The Early and Imperial Kingdom in Southeast Asian History", in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, edited by D. Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: Southeast Asian Studies and ANU, 1986), pp. 2–3, after Georges Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968).
18. For recent discussions of nationalist historiography in the region, see the essays in *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, edited by Abu Talib Ahmad and Tan Liok Ee (Singapore and Athens, Ohio: Singapore University Press and Ohio University Press, 2003).
19. See O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982); also Paul Mus, "Cultes indiens et indigenes au Champa", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise Extreme-Orient*

33 (1933): 367–410 and J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Studies in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1955).

20. For the application of Wittfogel's ideas, see the otherwise influential article of Harry J. Benda, "The Structure of Southeast Asian History: Some Preliminary Observations", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 3, no. 1 (1962): 106–38, and for the theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production, see F. Tichelman, *The Social Evolution of Indonesia: The Asiatic Mode of Production and its Legacy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980).
21. See the lucid account of this scholarship in Jan Wisseman-Christie, "Negara, Mandala, and Despotic State: Images of Early Java", in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, edited by D. Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: Southeast Asian Studies and ANU, 1986), pp. 65–93.
22. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region*, pp. 27–40; Stanley Tambaiah, *World-Conquerer and World-Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 102–31.
23. Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).
24. Wisseman-Christie, "Negara, Mandala and Despotic State", p. 69; Craig J. Reynolds, "A New Look at Old Southeast Asia", *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 2 (1995): 427.
25. Tony Day, *Fluid Iron: State Formation in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).
26. For attempts to compare and integrate these historiographies, see Kulke, "The Early and Imperial Kingdom in Southeast Asian History", and more recently, Tilman Frasch, "'In an Octupussy's Garden': Of Chakravartins, Little Kings, and a New Model of the Early State in South and Southeast Asia", in *Sharing Sovereignty: The Little Kingdom in South Asia*, edited by Georg Berkemer and Margret Frenz (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003), pp. 93–114.
27. Michael Aung-Thwin, "The 'Classical' in Southeast Asia: The Present in the Past", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1995): 83–84.
28. John Smail, "On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2 (1961): 72–102; Benda, "The Structure of Southeast Asian History".
29. Reynolds, "A New Look at Old Southeast Asia", p. 431.
30. Donald Emmerson, "'Southeast Asia': What's in a Name?", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, no. 1 (1984): 1–21.
31. Indeed, students in Europe and the United States may find it anachronistic that the prehistoric sites of Mohenjo Daro and Harrapa could be ascribed the beginnings of Pakistani civilization, though it is hardly clear why the modern state of India has any greater claim to this legacy than Pakistan. The term "India" itself, it should be noted, is an exogenous one, having been coined by Greeks, Turks, and others.
32. See, for example, D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (New York: St. Martin's

Press Hall, 1955) whose overview divides the time into "Pre-European" (with a dominant theme of Indian cultural influence) and (early and mature) "European Expansion" periods, followed by the age of nationalism, while Bernard Vlekke's *Nusantara: A History of Indonesia* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1965) study of Indonesia divides history into a "Hindu-Indonesian" period, a "Mohammedan-Portugese" period and two Dutch periods.

33. For a treatment and critique of "classical" Southeast Asia, see Aung-Thwin, "The 'Classical' in Southeast Asia".
34. Leonard and Barbara Watson Andaya, "Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period: Twenty-Five Years On", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1995): 93.
35. Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, 1993); *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Bangkok: Silkworm, 1999).
36. See Victor Lieberman, "An Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia? Problems of Regional Coherence — a Review Article", *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 3 (1995): 796–807, and the summary in Heather Sutherland, "Southeast Asian History and the Mediterranean Analogy", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2003): 10.
37. Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, 800–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 19.
38. Lieberman's (*Strange Parallels*, p. 23) emphasis on integration and coalescence beginning in the "charter state" period bears some resemblance to the "integrative" model of polity forwarded by Chattopadhyaya and Kulke. In Indian historiography, there has been even less inclination to think of long-term processes across the divide of medieval and early modern times.
39. Goldstone, "The Problem of the 'Early Modern' World".
40. Cf. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
41. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 744, *et passim*.
42. Ibid.; Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, p. 14.
43. See the collections of essays by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); idem., *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks* (Dehli: Oxford University Press, 2005); and the important edited volume by Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia 1750–1950* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003).
44. There have been a number of useful overviews of this problem, notably Ian W. Mabbet, "The Indianization of Southeast Asia: Reflections on the Historical Sources", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (1977): 143–61, and

more recently, Hermann Kulke, "Indian Colonies, Indianization, or Cultural Convergence? Reflections on the Changing Image of India's Role in South-East Asia", *Semaian* 3 (1990): 8–32.

45. André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Islamic World*, *Volume 2, The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest, 11th–13th Centuries* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 52ff.
46. R.C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1944).
47. There had been critiques of these ideas as early as the 1930s, most notably by Dutch scholar van Leur, but his work was published after an untimely death and gained due recognition only in the 1960s, Kulke, "Indian Colonies", p. 11.
48. Georges Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968). The distinction between *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *brahmin* "theories" was first made by F.D.K. Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961).
49. Mabbet, "Indianization of Southeast Asia", pp. 143–44.
50. Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 8–9.
51. J.G. de Casparis, *India and Maritime South East Asia: A Lasting Relationship* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1983), and Wolters, *History, Culture and Region*.
52. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region*, p. 9.
53. Paul Wheatley, "Presidential Address: India beyond the Ganges — Desultory Reflections on the Origins of Civilization in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (1982): 18.
54. Kulke, "Indian Colonies", p. 21.
55. Ibid., p. 24.
56. Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development on Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); idem., "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600–1500", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 2 (2004): 213–60.
57. K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 37–41.
58. Denys Lombard, "Networks and Synchronisms in Southeast Asian History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 26, no. 1 (1995): 10–16.
59. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, pp. 6–15.
60. Reynolds, "A New Look at Old Southeast Asia," p. 424.
61. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region*, pp. 15–26.
62. Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 531.
63. Ibid., p. 531.

64. Here Pollock seems to have misread Wolters, who does not so much suggest that Sanskrit terminology signified something completely different in local contexts, as that Sanskrit sensibility was grafted onto local meanings, thereby accentuating and giving greater endurance to them, albeit through new vocabulary. The implication of Pollock's criticism, that Sanskrit words could not be invested with local meanings, seems to presume a sort of monovocality for language at odds with his historical approach.
65. While Pollock's observations on the rise of Sanskrit as a language of power are undeniable, his contention about the discursive division of labour between Sanskrit and local languages, upon which his theory of "cosmopolitanism" rests, applies neither to north India nor much of south of India during early medieval times. Beyond the Deccan, it is only the Pallavas who embody this particular instantiation of literary and quotidian language, and thus perhaps, by extension, Southeast Asia.
66. Indian Marxist historiography, concerned with large agrarian empires, remained characteristically indifferent to commercial and cultural networks between these regions.
67. Some modern Indonesian scholars in the 1960s, for example, attempted to date the arrival of Islam in Aceh, as early as the seventh century, directly from Arabia. See Howard M. Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans, and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 2007), pp. 18–19.
68. See the useful discussion of Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, pp. 16–17ff.
69. For a comparison of South and Southeast Asian processes of indigenization, see Stephen Headley, *Durga's Mosque: Cosmology, Conversion and Community in Central Javanese Islam* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 9–35.
70. See Elizabeth Lambourn "The Formation of the *batu Aceh* Tradition in Fifteenth-Century Samudera-Pasai", in *Islam and Sumatra in the Pre-Modern Period*, edited by E. Lambourn, special issue of *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32, no. 93 (2004): 211–48.
71. At various time Islamic crafts, such as stone carvings for graves, were disseminated to Southeast Asia from Gujarat: see Elizabeth Lambourn, "From Cambay to Samudera-Pasai and Gresik: the Export of Gujarati Grave Memorials to Sumatra and Java in the Fifteenth Century C.E.", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 31, no. 90 (2003): 221–89. Various Malay literary texts continued to be indebted to Deccani and Mughal Persianate prototypes. See: Vladimir, Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KLTV Press, 2004), p. 329ff.
72. Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories", pp. 748–49.

2

LIKE BANNERS ON THE SEA
Muslim Trade Networks and Islamization in Malabar and Maritime Southeast Asia

Sebastian R. Prange[1]

While the antiquity and depth of the connection between southern India and coastal Southeast Asia are well attested, much of the existing literature — whether concerned with commercial interaction or cultural transmission — has concentrated on Gujarat, the Coromandel Coast, and Bengal. This chapter seeks to broaden this focus by examining the links between Southeast Asia and the Malabar Coast, with particular emphasis on the role of Muslim trading networks.[2]

Even on initial reflection, there are numerous parallels in the histories of the Malabar Coast and Southeast Asia. The eastward movement of the Hindu-Buddhist traditions is thought to have originated from the ancient Tamil kingdoms of South India, which included the Malabar Coast. Over the centuries, both regions remained culturally linked in transoceanic Brahmanical and Buddhist networks. There are also similarities in the introduction of Islam to the regions, most clearly in the role of trade in the propagation of the faith and in the incorporation of local traditions into Islamic practices. Even more striking are the economic parallels. Insular Southeast Asia and the Malabar Coast were both located at nodal points of the Indian Ocean trade routes, making them natural entrepôts. Moreover, they were the foremost producers of spices and, as such, developed into important supraregional

markets. Politically the regions were, with few exceptions, fragmented and characterized by continuous competition to attract long-distance trade. Both regions were also crucial to the European expansion in the Indian Ocean and developed into focal points of early colonialism and resistance.

These parallels in the religious, economic, and political spheres merit a closer examination of the two regions with regard to their direct contacts, as well as their participation in mutual networks. This chapter sets out the foundations of such a study by first examining the commercial connections between the Malabar Coast and maritime Southeast Asia before considering their interactions in the spheres of religion and culture.

I

Maritime trade has connected the shores of the Indian Ocean since the earliest days of seafaring, creating elements of cohesion as well as crystallizing contrasts. According to Kirti Chaudhuri, the exchange of ideas and material objects created "a strong sense of unity" amid the social and cultural diversity of the Indian Ocean littoral.[3] As regional markets developed and navigational expertise accumulated, merchants were able to match supply with demand over greater distances in increasingly efficient commercial networks. These networks were shaped by the major markets they served: China, India, the Middle East, and, to a lesser degree, Europe.

Maritime Southeast Asia and the Malabar Coast played an important role in the development of these networks as transhipment points and suppliers of key commodities, especially spices. Historians have tended to focus on linkages of Southeast Asia with the Konkan and Coromandel coasts, for which the epigraphic evidence is most direct. This section aims to augment this literature by proposing long-standing and continuous mercantile contacts between Southeast Asia and the Malabar Coast. It considers, in turn, evidence relating to early South Indian merchant associations, Muslim trade networks, and the role of China.

SOUTH INDIAN TRADE WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

The predictability of the monsoon system has long stimulated long-range seafaring in the Indian Ocean. The *Puranas* suggest that Indian sailors visited Southeast Asia "in very remote times, probably far back into the prehistoric period".[4] These tales are clear on the motive for such voyages, which were almost all inspired by the quest for material riches. Southeast Asia, strategically situated at the maritime chokepoint between India and China, developed very

early on into "a cradle of heroic navigation".[5] Regional markets in Southeast Asia can be identified from the third century BCE, and more or less regular maritime trade between India and Southeast Asia certainly existed by the first century BCE. This exchange grew rapidly in the first millennium CE with the emergence of intermediate ports-of-trade.

The Malabar Coast constituted a central node in the Indian Ocean trade during the Roman period. Muziris (Tamil *Muciris*), its major port in antiquity, is mentioned by Pliny (the Elder) as the "*primum emporium Indiae*", and in the *Periplus Maris Erythræi* of the first century CE as abounding "in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks".[6] Malabar's chief port also had trade links with the East: the *Jataka* tales speak of voyages from Muziris to *Suvarnabhumi* ("Land of Gold"), a term that originally referred specifically to Sumatra, but came to be applied to the whole Indonesian Archipelago.[7] Nilakanta Sastri has pointed to evidence of Indian Ocean trade in Tamil sources and Pali Buddhism, which he interprets as references to the large gains enjoyed by Indian merchants from their trade with Southeast Asia.[8]

The earliest Southeast Asian source that lists foreign merchants, the Kalirungan inscription of 883 CE, mentions India's west coast. While a further inscription dated 1021 from the Brantas river delta speaks generically of *Drawida* to describe South Indians, the Garaman inscription of 1053 distinguishes between *Colika* (Cholas) and *Malyala* (Malayali).[9]

In his examination of Indian influences in Philippine languages, Juan Francisco questions why the long centuries of contact between Malabar and insular Southeast Asia did not result in more material evidence. He speculates that Malabari merchants transplanted the more prestigious Brahmanic and Sanskrit traditions that saturated Kerala's culture rather than their "indigenous" literary forms.[10] As a result, connections to the Malabar Coast are not directly observable in Southeast Asian inscriptions. The use of epigraphic evidence is further complicated because the names of certain Indian merchant groups were adopted into various Southeast Asian languages as blanket-terms that encompassed all merchant communities from South India. The term "*Kling*" (Kalinga), for instance, came to refer to all South Asian traders.[11] Rather than revealing a lack of knowledge, such compounds may reflect the nature of medieval South Indian merchant associations, which were not exclusive guilds or corporations, but dispersed communities bound by common codes of conduct.[12]

One of the earliest known South Indian merchant associations, the *Manigraman* (from Sanskrit *vanik-graman*, "guild of merchants") is mentioned in copper plate inscriptions from the ninth century. They record the grant of certain trade privileges on the Malabar Coast to its merchants.[13] During this

period, this merchant group appears to have extended its operations to the Coromandel Coast.[14] The *Manigraman* are also mentioned in a ninth-century Tamil inscription from Takua Pa/Ko Kho Khao, an entrepôt on the west coast of the Malay peninsula. It records the construction of a reservoir under the protection of the "members of the *Manigraman*".[15] After the ninth century, the presence of this merchant association is attested in various South Indian as well as Southeast Asian inscriptions, usually in the context of donations to political rulers or the public good.[16] The *Manigraman* appear to have successfully acquired political support for their ventures in South India and Southeast Asia and, through patronage recorded in dedicatory inscriptions, to have established a South Indian cultural presence abroad.

Kenneth Hall interprets the Tamil inscriptions of Southeast Asia as evidence that South Indian merchant collectives displayed "some degree of residential commitment" that went beyond seasonal visits.[17] The eleventh-century Manañjung charter from the Brantas delta refers to such a foreign merchant association in the context of warehouse-organizations and the storage of black pepper, Malabar's most important export.[18] The notion that Malabari merchants settled in Southeast Asia is further supported by a thirteenth-century inscription from Pagan, noting a donation made to a local *nanadeśi* temple by a native of the Malabar Coast who was connected to a South Indian merchant group.[19]

In the context of these trade connections, the Chola raid on Srivijaya in 1025 can be interpreted as a "trade war", triggered by Srivijaya's interjection in South Indian commerce with China.[20] The end of Chola rule and the establishment of the Vijayanagara empire (*c.*1340–1700 CE) do not appear to have broken the trade links between Malabar and Southeast Asia. By that time, long-distance trade on the coast was dominated by Muslim merchant groups that were not dependent on political conditions on the Coromandel Coast. Furthermore, Vijayanagara did not establish control over the Malabar Coast, but rather relied on its long-distance trade for its strategically important supply of horses as well as luxury goods.[21] Although, as will be shown below, the direct trade between Malabar and Southeast Asia underwent various fluctuations over this period, it was disrupted only in the sixteenth century when the Portuguese caused a realignment of the traditional trade routes.[22]

MUSLIM TRADERS AND NETWORKS

The argument for direct and sustained commercial interaction between the Malabar Coast and maritime Southeast Asia comes into sharper focus when considered in the context of the Indian Ocean trade networks. Arabs had

traded on the Malabar Coast since pre-Islamic times and reached Southeast Asia as early as the seventh century in search of spices and drugs.[23] After the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate in the mid-eighth century, Muslim merchants travelled to Sumatran ports.[24] By the ninth century, the merchants of Basra and Siraf appear to have sent regular trading missions to India and Southeast Asia. The earliest Arabic source to describe these voyages is the *Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind* from the middle of the ninth century. This text, usually attributed to Sulayman ("the Merchant"), describes an itinerary from Muscat via Quilon (Kollam) on the Malabar Coast, to Southeast Asia and eventually China.[25] A ninth-century shipwreck of Arab or Indian origin discovered in Indonesian waters supports these historical records with archaeological evidence.[26] Around that time, spurred by the nascent Asian sea trade boom, Arab trade crystallized into distinct networks, and permanent Muslim trading communities became established both on the Malabar Coast and in Southeast Asia.[27]

The earliest compilations of Arab traveller's tales (*aja'ib*) dealing with Southeast Asia also date from that period, and the region is frequently mentioned in Arab topographies and geographical dictionaries. Despite the significance of these Arabic texts as being the few sources for the early history of maritime Southeast Asia, much of the information they contain is of limited value. The compilers of such works rarely travelled beyond India, if that far, and the emphasis on "transmitted knowledge" in Islamic scholarship promoted the (typically unacknowledged) repetition of earlier texts.[28]

Archaeological data suggest that the early Arab trade already went beyond simple point-to-point sailing, developing into "a complex mosaic with several feeder routes joining in to make a trading circuit", with many goods transhipped from ports other than their origin.[29] Around the eleventh century, Indian Ocean trade evolved further into a more complex and more integrated system. Chaudhuri first proposed that during that period, the ocean became segmented into three distinct commercial circuits.[30] In this scheme, the Malabar Coast and insular Southeast Asia are part of the same, central circuit (centred on the Bay of Bengal), as well as both being located at its intersection with the other circuits (centred on the Arabian Sea and the South China Sea, respectively). They were therefore ideally situated to develop emporia that integrated regional markets into the flows of trans-continental traffic and reduced transaction costs.

This more efficient organization of the Indian Ocean commerce was prompted by an increase in trade volume stimulated by the synchronous rise of the Fatimids in Egypt, the Cholas in South India, and the Song dynasty in China, as well as the expansion of the agricultural base and political growth

of the Khmer and Burmese states.[31] From the eleventh century, a marked increase in Arab interest in Southeast Asia is discernible in the sources. This deepening of trade relations is also reflected in Chinese sources: the prefect of Quanzhou, for instance, observed in the early twelfth century that frankincense, a product of Southern Arabia, was "shipped to Srivijaya by the Arabs in exchange for other goods".[32] It has also been noted that the most prosperous merchants in Quanzhou were Muslims, both of Chinese and foreign origin.[33] As a result of this growing interchange between the western and eastern Indian Ocean and the seasonal nature of monsoon navigation, South India became "a new international commercial hub, as the strategic intermediary between the Middle East and Southeast Asia".[34] It is this type of international entrepôt that Ibn Battuta witnessed in the fourteenth century, when he described Calicut (Kozhikode) as one of the greatest ports in the world, visited by merchants from China, Java, Ceylon, the Maldives, Yemen and Persia.[35] (See Colour Plate 1.)

The commercial expansion of what has been described as the "thirteenth-century world system" in the Indian Ocean attracted increasing numbers of merchants from South India and the Middle East to Southeast Asia's trading centres.[36] As early as the twelfth century, Chinese observers noted that Southeast Asian maritime trade was dominated by "Western" Muslims, although this probably referred specifically to the trade in luxury goods reaching China's shores.[37] Remarkable insights into these long-distance trade networks are afforded by a number of sources from medieval Yemen concerned with the port of Aden. Around the ninth century, Aden replaced Siraf as the primary entrepôt at the western end of the Indian Ocean trade routes, linking them to the Red Sea trade with Jeddah, Aydhab, and Egypt, the Arabian caravan routes, as well as to the commerce with the Swahili coast.[38] The importance Malabar's Muslim merchants accorded the commerce with Aden is evident from a chronicle of Yemen's Rasulid dynasty (1229–1445 CE). It relates that in 1393, an envoy from these merchants arrived at the Rasulid court to request permission that the *khutba* in Calicut's mosques be read in the Sultan's name.[39] (See Colour Plates 2 and 3.)

An invaluable source for the thirteenth-century Indian Ocean trade at Aden has recently become available in an edition entitled *Nur al-ma'arif* ("The Light of Knowledge").[40] This source, extant in a single manuscript in private hands, contains the archives of the Rasulid ruler al-Muzaffar Yusuf (1249–95 CE). It demonstrates the key importance of the trade between Malabar and Aden through lists of imports and taxes, honours bestowed on Malabari merchants at Aden, and the Rasulid practice of sending stipends to Muslim preachers in Malabari ports.[41] Several commodities detailed in

Nur al-ma'arif can be unambiguously linked to Southeast Asia: recorded are the import and relevant taxes for nutmeg and mace, different qualities of Malaysian aloe woods (*Aquilaria agallocha*, Lour.), as well as camphor specified as Sumatran.[42] A Yemeni fiscal treatise from the early fifteenth century confirms the continued trade of these Southeast Asian products at Aden.[43] These sources' multiple references to the trade with the Malabar Coast predictably relate primarily to black pepper, but also to other spices, textiles, and even rice. Ibn Battuta lists several Malabari ports from which ships sailed to Yemen and also confirms that Indian merchants were settled in Aden.[44] The Rasulid sources serve to underline the significance the trade with the spice-producing regions had to the rulers of Aden and the Indian Ocean trade in general.

This outline of a Muslim trade network in the Indian Ocean conveys a sense of the pre-eminence its merchants enjoyed in the lucrative spice trade. This is not to say that Muslims carried the bulk of Indian Ocean cargoes, nor that their networks were exclusive. The documents from the Cairo Geniza provide clear evidence of partnerships between Muslims and Jews, and show that, in general, "a spirit of friendly cooperation prevailed between Jew, Muslim, and Hindu (also Christian, although rarely mentioned)".[45] The Geniza documents also confirm the span of these networks in their frequent mention of the Malabar Coast (especially Mangalore), as well references to Southeast Asian ports visited by Jewish merchants. These examples from the western end of the Indian Ocean trade depict a burgeoning spice network — dominated by Muslims and centred on the main cultivation regions of Malabar and Southeast Asia — that comes into closer focus when compared with evidence from its eastern terminus, China.

THE SPICE TRADE WITH CHINA

The spice trade continued to expand after the thirteenth century, driven by a nearly insatiable European demand, and facilitated by the reorganization of the Red Sea route by the Mamluks and the emergence of the Karimi merchant network.[46] This period also witnessed the beginning of a distinct new phase in the relations of China with India and Southeast Asia, marked by a transition from the private trade networks of the Song period to the government-led maritime networks of the Yuan and early Ming dynasties.[47] For this period, there is good evidence for Chinese trade with South India and particularly the Malabar Coast. Maritime archaeology in Quanzhou Bay has yielded a thirteenth-century Chinese shipwreck containing black pepper and South Indian cotton textiles, as well as products from Southeast Asia, the Arabian

Peninsula, and East Africa.[48] The record of a Yuan mission to the Malabar Coast in 1281 confirms that the Chinese sailed to southwestern India during this period.[49] Marco Polo, a decade later, draws particular attention to the scale of Malabar's spice trade with China.

> Ships come hither from many quarters, but especially from the great province of Manzi [southern China]. Coarse spices are exported hence both to Manzi and to the west, and that which is carried by the merchants of Aden goes on to Alexandria, but the ships that go in the latter direction are not one to ten of those that go to the eastward….[50]

In the first half of the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta was similarly struck by the great Chinese merchant fleets at Calicut; his contemporary Wang Da-yuan described the town as the principal port of the "Western Ocean".[51] The Yuan sent numerous missions to Malabar (four alone between 1280 and 1283) that reflected the commercial importance of the spice trade, in which pepper was the single most important product.

Black pepper (*piper nigrum*) is native to the Malabar Coast and it has been estimated that during the pre-European period, Malabar accounted for as much as two-thirds of the total Asian pepper production.[52] China began to import Indian pepper during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) and by the thirteenth century, Marco Polo estimated, undoubtedly somewhat generously, that some ten thousand pounds of pepper were consumed daily at Hangzhou, all of which came from India.[53] It remains ambiguous when pepper began to be cultivated in Java and Sumatra. Prior to the fifteenth century, Chinese sources mentioning pepper in Java seem to refer to the indigenous "long pepper" (*piper retrofractum*) rather than black pepper.[54] Some Malabari pepper passed through Southeast Asian markets before reaching its Chinese consumers, probably a result of the increasing number of Muslim merchants residing there. The twelfth-century travel account of Chau Ju-kua lists pepper as a produce of Java, but adds the caveat that "some say that most of the pepper comes from the country of Wu-li-pa [Malabar] … and that the produce bought by the foreign traders in Shö-p'o [Java] comes from Wu-li-pa [Malabar]".[55] Pepper became so essential as a culinary and medicinal product in China that in 1403, the emperor Yong-le granted traders from South India, in spite of objections from his ministers, exemption from the customary taxes for selling pepper in the Chinese market.[56] It appears that in the same year the Chinese court first learned of the existence of Melaka from one of these South Indian pepper merchants, a Muslim believed to be from Malabar.[57]

The Ming emperors initially continued the aforementioned numerous missions of the Yuan dynasty to Malabar, culminating in the great voyages

of Zheng He from 1405 to 1433 that repeatedly visited Cochin (Kochi) and Calicut on the Malabar Coast. According to Ming sources, the rulers of Calicut in turn sent multiple missions to the Chinese court for the purposes of tribute trade.[58] The abrupt discontinuation of Chinese voyages to the Malabar Coast after 1439 has posed "an enigma in the history of Asia's maritime trade".[59] In the early sixteenth century, Joseph of Cranganore made this report to the Portuguese:

> These people from Cataio [Cathay] … had a factory in Calichut, and because the king of that place committed outrages against them they rebelled, and having gathered a very large armada, they came to the city of Calichut, which they destroyed. From that time up until the present, they have not come to trade in the aforesaid place….[60]

Different explanations have been put forward for the cessation of Sino-Malabari relations and the alleged attack on Calicut. They include a presumed previous attack on the Chinese incited by local Muslims, as well as the suggestion that Calicut's ruler reacted against the elevation of the political status of the rival port Cochin by Chinese envoys.[61] It has also been speculated that Zheng He, who is believed to have died around 1435, fell victim to this outbreak of violence and perished at Calicut or on the homeward journey.[62] Anthony Reid suggests that it was the Chinese themselves who introduced pepper to northern Sumatra in the early 1400s, perhaps in response to this disruption of their usual trade with Malabar.[63] A century later, Tomé Pires estimated the annual pepper production of Aceh to be roughly equivalent to that of Malabar. However, he also noted that the Southeast Asian pepper was not as good as that of Malabar, with the exception of the small quantity produced on the Sunda Islands.[64]

The better data available for the sixteenth century are a result of the great interest the Portuguese (as well as other Europeans) took in the pepper trade, and their need to relay information back to the metropolis. The initial aim of the Portuguese was to take control of Malabar's pepper trade but they soon broadened their ambitions to the Southeast Asian spice trade, notably with the capture of Melaka in 1511.[65] Both in Calicut and Aceh, the two regions vital to the Muslim spice networks, Muslim traders initially "arose in a spirit of counter-crusade against the Portuguese".[66] Their resistance to the Portuguese monopoly claims is evident from the extensive discussions of so-called "piracy" in the European sources. While local Muslim traders had little choice but to confront the Portuguese, the wealthy expatriate merchants were able to relocate and reorganize their activities. By the 1530s, a new Muslim trade route developed from Aceh via the Maldives to the Red Sea, which

carried as much pepper to Europe as did the Portuguese on the Cape route. In 1569, the Archbishop of Goa griped that so much pepper was arriving in Mecca from Aceh that some of the surplus was re-exported to Gujarat![67] The Portuguese attempts at suppressing Muslim trade in the Indian Ocean thus caused a reorientation of the spice trade away from China towards the western Indian Ocean, causing an even greater integration of the Malabar Coast and Southeast Asia into the reformed Muslim trading network of this later period.[68]

It has been suggested that because political conditions were influenced by unpredictable long-distance trade, "Indonesian-Malay polities did not control their own destinies".[69] This view, however, misrepresents Southeast Asia's role in the development of Indian Ocean trade networks. Through its ports-of-trade, maritime Southeast Asia was integral to these networks as consumer as well as a producer of internationally traded commodities, through the activities of indigenous merchants and political elites, and by integrating its regional trade networks into the wider patterns of Indian Ocean commerce. Moreover, Southeast Asia was also an important arena in which the main cultural and religious trends of the Indian Ocean world were reflected, adapted, and galvanized. It is this cultural and religious interaction, which accompanied and underpinned the commercial exchange, that can further elucidate the extent and nature of the networks outlined above.

II

The debate about the agency of traders versus that of more overtly religious figures — be they Brahmans, scholars, or Sufis — in the introduction of new religious practices to Southeast Asia has for decades engaged the attention of historians. The hypothesis that Hinduism came to Southeast Asia through Indian traders raised the objection that uneducated traders "could never have been a medium for the transmission of the subtler forms of Indian ritual and aesthetic sensibility".[70] As a result, the focus shifted away from merchants — who, it was said, "as a rule are disinterested in cultural transmissions" — and instead concentrated on the role of Indian Brahmans at the courts of Southeast Asian rulers.[71] However, in recent years, the role of traders in this process has again attracted greater attention, this time in their function as facilitators of the movement of Brahmans and especially artisans, who transferred Indian arts along the established trade routes in their search for new sources of patronage.[72] In 1961, Paul Wheatley argued that,

> Although Indian traders have been deprived of their role as bearers of Indian culture to the courts of South-East Asia, the importance of their

> explorations in that region cannot be over-estimated. By disseminating their wares through the islands and peninsulas they also contributed to the spread of Indian crafts and customs. Without the traders, populo minuto though they may have been, it is unlikely that Indonesian princes would have been in touch with India at all.[73]

The view of a cultural "Indianization" of Southeast Asia has been gradually replaced by a more nuanced interpretation of an intricate network of relations that was vastly more complicated than any unidirectional transmission from a "sender" (India) to the "recipient" (Southeast Asia). Rather, the already politically and socially sophisticated polities of coastal Southeast Asia actively sought and incorporated Indian cultural systems for their own purposes; it might be said that they "Indianized" themselves.[74]

TRADE AND ISLAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

These shifts in the debate about the transmission of Hinduism and Buddhism to Southeast Asia are to some degree reflected in the changing notions about the introduction of Islam to the region. While some scholars believe that religious conversion was the work of Muslim traders, others argue for an emphasis on Sufis who were able to reconcile Southeast Asian customs with the new faith.[75] Overall, "Historians have been reluctant to see merchant sojourners as sources of cultural transmission", despite the special opportunities expatriate merchants had for cultural brokering.[76] It must be remembered that Islam is an actively proselytizing religion closely tied to the concerns of trade: the Qur'an repeatedly refers to maritime trade and even describes the sails of ships as portents of the faith, "like banners on the sea" (42:32).

As seen above, Muslims had traded with Southeast Asia since the early days of Islam. The earliest evidence, in the form of a gravestone at Lamreh in Aceh, of a Southeast Asian ruler converting to Islam dates from 1211 CE.[77] In the 1290s, Marco Polo noted that the town-dwellers of nearby Perlak had been converted to Islam by Muslim merchants.[78] Similarly, the gravestone of the first Muslim ruler of Samudera-Pasai, another port in Aceh, dates to 1297 CE. These observations suggest that the political and commercial elites of Aceh's ports adopted Islam from around the 1290s. The decline of Srivijaya had enhanced the commercial significance of the small, independent kingdoms centred on the Strait of Malacca that competed for the revenues of the long-distance trade. The prosperity of the Muslim merchants (hailing from the Middle East, India, and China) who dominated these trade networks encouraged conversion, not least through intermarriage.

Conversions among the local population register from the early thirteenth century and appear to have occurred in significant numbers only from the late fourteenth century onwards.[79] This lapse has been interpreted as an argument against the agency of traders in the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia; however, it can also be argued that only during this period did Muslim traders gain the economic and political status to promote large-scale conversion. In the archipelago, "the time was one of internal change, of a reshuffling of power and of new attempts at dominance" in the absence of a puissant India, China, or regional power.[80] In terms of maritime trade, this period also witnessed the intensification of commercial contacts between Southeast Asia and South India, the backing of Chinese Muslim traders by the Yuan, and the subsequent resettlement of Chinese Muslim diasporas to Southeast Asia caused by the Ming restrictions on private overseas trade.

It is argued here that rather than constituting an argument against the agency of traders, the fact that Islamization in Southeast Asia occurred from the thirteenth century onwards, when the Indian Ocean commerce was thus galvanized, emphasizes the critical role of Islamic networks. Consequently, it is necessary to reassess the roles of Muslim merchants and religious figures to elucidate the links between the commercial circuits, and scholarly and Sufic networks operating in conjunction with them. For this, it is again useful to return to the connections between the Malabar Coast and Southeast Asia.

SUFIS AND SCHOLARS

Like the indigenous Muslims of Malabar known as the Mappilas, Southeast Asian Muslims have constructed elaborate traditions surrounding the introduction of Islam to the region. In his examination of the conversion myths of Indonesia, Russell Jones has identified their tendency to represent the conversion of rulers to the hitherto unknown faith as prompted by a supernatural event.[81] This topos corresponds to the founding legend of Malabar's Mappila community. It is widely accepted for both regions that the gradual process of Islamic conversion, on the popular level from the fourteenth century onwards, was driven by the activities of Sufi orders and individual holy men.[82] Sufism and its mystical traditions facilitated the incorporation of existing South Indian and Southeast Asian customs into the new faith. In Malabar, native converts to Islam continued some distinctively pre-Islamic social practices such as matrilineality. In Java, the forms of Islamic prayer were adapted to accommodate local spiritual practices.[83] David Parkin argues that in the Indian Ocean world, it is, therefore, more apt to speak of

an acceptance of Islamic practices into pre-Islamic cosmology and customs rather than conversion to a new orthodoxy.[84]

It is known that the new centres of international Buddhism emerging after the ninth century were situated at strategically important regions of long-distance trade.[85] Similarly, this author's ongoing research on the Malabar Coast shows that sites associated with Sufi activities and early conversion were almost invariably connected to regional or long-distance trade routes.[86] It is, of course, not surprising that Sufi *tariqa*s utilized the Islamic trade routes and facilities of Muslim merchants to pursue their quests. In any case, these groups would not always be distinguishable as some Sufis are known to have combined their zeal for the propagation of Islam with an eye for profitable business.

Specific regions brought forth some of the most illustrious merchant families active in the Indian Ocean, as well as successfully exporting their distinct strands of Sufism. The Hadhramaut region of the Yemen, for instance, has a particularly strong association with mercantile and religious activities in Malabar as well as insular Southeast Asia.[87] In his analysis of Hadhrami chronicles of the sixteenth century, R.B. Serjeant recorded his surprise at how frequently Aceh appeared in Arabic works of that period.[88] Hadhrami *sharif* (or *sayyid*) families, who claimed direct descent from the Prophet, played a particularly prominent role in the Muslim communities of the Indian Ocean littoral as merchants, scholars, and Sufis.

> As a group, *sharif* brought to the coastal towns two qualifications in unlimited demand. One was literacy and knowledge of the *shari'ah*; the other was that elusive attribute called *baraka*, the aura of divine blessing.… Aside from commerce, which everyone seemed to have a hand in, sharifian families performed multiple functions as town officials, judges, secretaries, political mediators, Sufi teachers, miracle-workers, and general validators of the Islamic status of the community and its government.[89]

Many of members of this Islamic elite moved in scholarly networks centred on seats of learning such as Mecca and Baghdad, or around revered individuals. In the Muslim communities of the commercial centres of the Indian Ocean, the Shafi'i *madhhab* was of particular prominence; adherence to a common school of law was an important factor in commercial dealings as it could be relevant in the adjudication of disputes. Ibn Battuta, always glad to display his own schooling in Shafi'i jurisprudence, noted its prevalence among Malabar's Muslims as well as Samudra's ruling house.[90] The origins and development of Shafi'i networks — spun across the trade routes of the medieval Indian Ocean and dealing in textual traditions, legal opinions, and scholarly pedigree — are only beginning to emerge.[91]

One of the earliest documented examples of this has been outlined around Abu ʿAbd Allah Masʿud b. Muhammad al-Jawi. The *nisba* "al-Jawi" of this thirteenth-century Shafiʿi scholar and mystic active in Aden evokes an association with Java (or the broader Indonesian Archipelago), and there is some suggestion that the family was involved in the spice trade between India and Southeast Asia.[92] Moreover, through his associates and adepts, Masʿud al-Jawi can also be linked to the Qadiri Sufi order, which became very influential in the development of Islam in Southeast Asia.[93]

The sporadic, yet tantalizing, suggestions of the operation of such networks in sources from Arabia, India, and Southeast Asia demand further examination, especially at its points of contact with local structures. All seems to point towards interlocked commercial and scholarly networks, which Ulrike Freitag describes as a concrete intermingling of trade, scholarship, and at times, politics.[94] Pilgrimage to Islam's holy sites in the Hijaz, as well as to Sufi shrines in South and Southeast Asia, formed another important dimension of these oceanwide networks.[95] From the thirteenth century onwards, many Muslim traders and religious leaders active in Southeast Asia hailed from India rather than the traditional Arab heartland, and the new Muslim courts patronised religious scholars.[96] Michael Laffan draws the parallel that the "Islamising courts of Southeast Asia still imported teachers from India and beyond, much as their Indianised predecessors had welcomed multi-ethnic expertise to establish their entrepôts in earlier periods".[97] Therefore, the better question to ask of the sources is not whether traders, Sufis, or the *ulama*, were decisive in the Islamization of Southeast Asia, but rather how these various actors fitted into the networks that connected the region to the commercial, cultural, and intellectual currents of the Indian Ocean.

III

In recent years, the field of Indian Ocean studies has experienced significant developments, marked by a mounting number of interregional and interdisciplinary research projects alongside increasing institutionalization.[98] The study of networks and their relations has emerged as among the field's most rewarding as well as challenging pursuits. Such studies tend to find complex systems with multiple levels of connections that cannot be analytically reduced to core-periphery relationships. In the context of the conference out of which this volume emerges, they serve to "rescue the history of Islam from a persistent bias in favour of its Arab and Near Eastern core, which relegates other Islamic lands to the status of a set of peripheries".[99]

This contribution has focused on the direct links between the Malabar Coast and maritime Southeast Asia, as well as their participation in interlocking trade circuits and mutual networks. Evidence for Malabar's part in the South Indian merchant groups operating in Southeast Asia, the evolution of Arab trading networks, and the role of China, has provided insights into their commercial links. The examples of the spice trade and the suggestions of Sufi and Islamic scholarly networks have highlighted the extent and persistence of the material, intellectual, and spiritual exchanges. The emerging picture is of a trend towards progressive integration until at least the sixteenth century, of which the Islamization of coastal trading centres was an integral part.[100] The commercial and religious experiences of the Malabar Coast and maritime Southeast Asia demonstrate intriguing parallels, in part because they were shaped by shared processes that reflect the nature of the multidimensional networks of the Indian Ocean. A focus on the connections between the nodal points around which these networks condensed promises to add much depth and context to the understanding of the historical currents that shaped the Indian Ocean and its regions.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the organizers and participants of the "Re-Centering Islam" conference (Singapore, 4–5 June 2007) for their responses as well as Professors William G. Clarence-Smith (SOAS, London) and Merle C. Ricklefs (National University of Singapore) for their comments on earlier drafts. Any remaining errors of fact or interpretation remain the author's responsibility.
2. The term "maritime Southeast Asia" is used here to refer specifically to the Malay archipelago (of modern-day Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines), as well as the coastal regions of the southern Malay Peninsula. For the purposes of this discussion, it is this area that is referred to as Southeast Asia even where not explicitly qualified as "maritime" or "coastal".
3. Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 21.
4. Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961), p. 184. As an explanation as to why the knowledge gained from these early voyages was not recorded, Wheatley offers that the "genius of Indian thought sought its development in realms other than that of historical or geographical writing"; ibid., p. 177. For an overview of the early history of Malay sailing see Lynda N. Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to* 1500 (Armonk & London: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 11–36.

5. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 59.
6. Pliny (Gaius Plinius Secundus), *Natural History*, 10 vols., translated by H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1942–52), II, lib. 6, §104; Anonymous, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, translated by W.H. Schoff (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2001), § 54, p. 44. The *Manimçkhalai* also describes the port of Muziris and Yavana merchants purchasing pepper there; see Moti Chandra, *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977), p. 154.
7. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 182.
8. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *South Indian Influences in the Far East* (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1949), p. 123. I am grateful to Dr Daud Ali for bringing this reference to my attention.
9. Jan W. Christie, "Asian Sea Trade between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries and Its Impact on the States of Java and Bali", in *Archaeology of Seafaring: The Indian Ocean in the Ancient Period*, edited by H.P. Ray (Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1999), p. 247; Kenneth R. Hall, "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600–1500", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 2 (2004): 224.
10. Juan R. Francisco, "Sanskrit in Philippine Languages: Reflections on Pre-colonial Trade and Traffic", in *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime* History, edited by K.S. Mathew (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995), pp. 51–52.
11. Christie, "Asian Sea Trade", pp. 246f. Similarly, many of the "Gujarati" merchants in sixteenth-century Melaka were not actually from Gujarat, but rather from India's west coast and Sri Lanka; see Kenneth R. Hall, "Multi-Dimensional Networking: Fifteenth-Century Indian Ocean Maritime Diaspora in Southeast Asian Perspective", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 4 (2006): 467.
12. K. Indrapala, "Some Medieval Mercantile Communities of South India and Ceylon", *Journal of Tamil Studies* 2, no. 2 (1970): 29.
13. Translated in P.J. Cherian, ed., *William Logan's Malabar Manual*, 2 vols. (Thirivananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers Department, 2000 [facsimile of Madras 1951 edition]), II, pp. cxxii–vi.
14. Jan W. Christie, "The Medieval Tamil-language Inscriptions in Southeast Asia and China", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1998): 241ff.
15. Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *The Malay Peninsula: Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road (100BC–1300AD)*, translated by V. Hobson (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 272–75.
16. Ibid., pp. 273f. Also see Meera Abraham**,** *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India* **(**New Delhi: Manohar, 1988); Indrapala, "Some Medieval Mercantile Communities", pp. 25–39.
17. Hall, "Local and International Trade", p. 226.
18. Christie, "Asian Sea Trade", app. 2.H., pp. 261ff.

19. E. Hultzsch, "A Vaishnava Inscription at Pagan", *Epigraphia Indica* 7 (1902–03): 197f. Also see Kenneth R. Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia", in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, vol. I: From Early Times to C 1800*, edited by N. Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 248ff.
20. Tansen Sen, "Maritime Contacts between China and the Cola Kingdom (A.D. 850–1279)", in *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans*, p. 35. For a differing interpretation, acknowledged by Sen, that views the raids as an expression of Chola expansionism, see George W. Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion: The Cola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya* (Madras: New Era, 1983), pp. 138–50.
21. Cf. K.N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002), pp. 317–46; Burton Stein, *The New Cambridge History of India, I.2: Vijayanagara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
22. Anthony Reid, "Aceh between Two Worlds: An Intersection of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean", in *Cross Currents and Community Networks: The History of the Indian Ocean World*, edited by H.P. Ray and E.A. Alpers (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 106.
23. From the time of the Caliph 'Uthman (644–56 CE), Arab emissaries reached the Chinese court; Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since C 1200*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 3. Also see Thomas Suárez, *Early Mapping of Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Periplus, 1999), p. 50; George F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, new ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 51–79.
24. Cf. Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia*, pp. 40–43.
25. Eusebius Renaudot, translator and ed., *Ancient Accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan Travellers Who Went to those Parts in the 9th Century* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995 [reprint of London 1733]), pp. 8ff; cf. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), pp. 25–27.
26. Michael Flecker, "A Ninth-Century AD Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China", *World Archaeology* 32, no. 3 (2001): 335–54.
27. On the Malabar Coast, these Muslim trading communities coexisted with other expatriate merchant groups including Jewish, Zoroastrian, and Christian ones.
28. Wheatley notes that "While this fossilized knowledge of the East before A.D. 1000 remained the common currency of the Muslim academic world, Arab pilots of the Indian Ocean were accumulating practical knowledge about the seas of the Indonesian Archipelago. When they first began to embody this information in charts and sailing directories we do not know, but the earliest surviving examples date from the end of the fifteenth century and compare very favourably with contemporary Chinese and European knowledge". Idem, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 212.
29. Himanshu P. Ray, *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 91.

30. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, ch. 2.
31. Haraprasad Ray, "Trade between South India and China, 1368–1644", in *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800*, edited by O. Prakash and D. Lombard (New Delhi: Manohar/Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999). p. 37; cf. Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia", p. 246.
32. Ye Tinggui, *Nanfan Xianglu*, cited in So Kee-Long, "Dissolving Hegemony or Changing Trade Patterns? Images of Srivijaya in the Chinese Sources of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1998): 303.
33. Roderich Ptak, "From Quanzhou to the Sulu Zone and Beyond: Questions Related to the Early Fourteenth Century", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1998): 281.
34. Hall, "Local and International Trade", p. 216.
35. T. Harb, ed., *Rihlat Ibn Battuta al-musammat tuhfat al-nuzzar fi ghara'ib al-amsar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), p. 572.
36. Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World-System A.D. 1250–1350* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 291–315; André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 3 vols. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 1990–2004), II, p. 288.
37. Wink, *Al-Hind*, II, p. 287.
38. An extensive study of Aden and its role in the medieval Indian Ocean trade is provided in Roxani E. Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
39. James W. Redhouse, ed., *The Pearl Strings: A History of the Resúliyy Dynasty of Yemen*, 5 vols. (London: Luzac and Co., 1906–18), V, pp. 244–47.
40. Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahim Jazim (ed.), *Nur al-ma-'arif fi nuzum wa-qawanin wa-a'raf al-Yaman fi al-'ahd al-muzaffari al-warif,* 2 vols. (San'a: Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales de Sana'a, 2003–05). The original text is also known as *al-Daftar al-Muzaffari*.
41. Jazim, ed., *Nur al-ma-'arif*, I, passim.
42. Jazim, ed., *Nur al-ma-'arif*. Nutmeg (*ghawza*), I, p. 422. Mace (*bisbasa*), I, p. 415. Malaysian aloe wood (*'ud qaquli*) of superior and mediocre quality, I, pp. 441, 461; for the identification of Qaqula, see Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic texts*, *passim*, and Michael Laffan, "Finding Java: Muslim nomenclature of insular Southeast Asia from Śrîvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje", Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series no. 52 (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2005), pp. 51ff. As for the Sumatran camphor (*kafur fansuri*), this reading diverges from the two versions given by Jazim (I, p. 449 *mansuri*; I, p. 461 "*asuri*"); *cf.* "Kafur" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition, 12 vols.*, edited by H.A.R. Gibb et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), IV, pp. 435–46.
43. G. Rex Smith, *A Medieval Administrative and Fiscal Treatise from the Yemen: The Rasulid Mulakhkas al-Fitan of al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Husayni* (Oxford: Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement, 2006), pp. 46ff.

44. T. Harb, ed., *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, p. 267.
45. Shlomo D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 185ff, 175–229. Also see Goitein, "Portrait of a Medieval India Trader: Three Letters from the Cairo Geniza", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50, no. 3 (1987): 449–64, as well as Goitein and Mordechai A. Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza 'India Book'* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
46. For the expansion of maritime trade up to the thirteenth century, see Jan W. Christie, "Javanese Markets and the Asian Sea Trade Boom of the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries A.D", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41, no. 3 (1998): 344–81; cf. Anthony Reid, "The Islamization of Southeast Asia", in *Historia: Essays in Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Department of History, University of Malaya*, edited by M. Abu Bakar, A. Kaur, and A.Z. Ghazali (Kuala Lumpur: Malayasian Historical Society, 1984), p. 20.
47. Cf. Tansen Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks to Southern Asia, 1200–1450", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 4 (2006): 421.
48. Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks", p. 424.
49. Ibid, pp. 424ff.
50. Yule, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, II, p. 325.
51. H.A.R. Gibb, translator and ed., *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1956–2000), IV, pp. 812–14; Haraprasad Ray, "China and the "Western Ocean" in the Fifteenth Century", in *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics*, edited by S. Chandra (New Delhi, Newbury Park, London: Sage Publications, 1987), p. 110.
52. Michael N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 82.
53. Yule, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, II, p. 161.
54. Cf. David Bulbeck et al., *Southeast Asian Exports since the 14th Century: Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), p. 62.
55. Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, translator, and ed., *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-fan-chï* (Frankfurt a.M.: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1996 [reprint of St. Petersburg 1911]), p. 223; cf. Paul Wheatley, "Geographical Notes on Some Commodities Involved in Sung Maritime Trade", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32, no. 2 (1959): 100ff.
56. Haraprasad Ray, "Trade between South India and China", p. 43.
57. Wang Gungwu, *Community and Nation: Essays on Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia, 1981), pp. 82–89.
58. Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks", pp. 437ff.
59. Haraprasad Ray, "An Enquiry into the Presence of the Chinese in South and

South-East Asia after the Voyages of Zheng He in Early Fifteenth Century", in *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans*, edited by K.S. Mathew, p. 97.

60. W.B. Greenlee, translator and ed., *The Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral to Brazil and India from Contemporary Documents and Narratives* (New Delhi, Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1995 [reprint of London 1938]), p. 109.
61. K.P.P. Menon, *History of Kerala, Written in the Form of Notes on Visscher's Letters from Malabar*, 4 vols., edited by T.K.K. Menon (New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1982–86 [reprint of 1924]), I, p. 287; cf. Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks", pp. 435–45.
62. This hypothesis has been put forward by Chinese scholars Zheng Yi Jun and later Lin Meicun and is reported in Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks", p. 440, and Ray, "An Enquiry into the Presence", pp. 99ff. That Zheng He resorted to the use of military force on several other occasions is highlighted in Geoff Wade, "The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 78, no. 1 (2005): 37–58.
63. Reid, "Aceh between Two Worlds", p. 106.
64. A. Cortesão, translator and ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 2 vols. (New Delhi, Madras: Asian Educational Service, 1990 [reprint of London 1944]), I, pp. 82ff, 107–10, 140, 144, 168. The estimate for Aceh's production is the total of Pires" figures for Pasai and Pidië.
65. For the importance of Melaka to the Indian Ocean spice trade, see Robert W. McRoberts, "A Study of Growth: an Economic History of Melaka 1400–1510", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 64, no. 2 (1991): 47–77.
66. Reid, "Aceh between Two Worlds", p. 106.
67. Cited in Bulbeck et al., *Southeast Asian Exports*, p. 63.
68. Ibid.; cf. Michael N. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India, I.1: The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 40–60; Anthony Reid, "The Ottomans in Southeast Asia", Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series no. 36 (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2005), pp. 3–5.
69. Eleanor Selling, "The Evolution of Trading States in Southeast Asia before the 17th Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1981), p. viii.
70. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 186.
71. Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 58.
72. Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion*, pp. 83ff.; cf. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, p. 301. The transmission of Indian crafts along trade routes has its parallel in the "Islamic period" in the trade of Islamicate tombstones between Gujarat and Southeast Asia; see Elizabeth Lambourn, "From Cambay to Samudera-Pasai and Gresik: The Export of Gujarati Grave Memorials to Sumatra and Java in the Fifteenth Century C.E.", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 31,

no. 90 (2003): 221–84, and J.E. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, "An early 16th Century Link between Gujarat and Java", *Artibus Asiae: Supplementum* 23, no. 2 (1966): 89–93.

73. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 188.
74. Cf. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *The Malay Peninsula*, p. 492.
75. Cf. Reid, "The Islamization of Southeast Asia", p. 15.
76. Hall, "Local and International Trade", p. 248.
77. Suwedi Montana, "Nouvelles Données sur les Royaumes de Lamuri et Barat", *Archipel* 53 (1997), pp. 83–95.
78. Henry Yule, translator and ed., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the Kingdoms and marvels of the East*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871), II, p. 227.
79. Cf. Merle C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk, CT: Eastbridge, 2006), pp. 15ff.
80. Wang Gungwu, "Southeast Asia between the 13th & 18th Centuries: Some Reflections on Political Fragmentation & Cultural Change", in M. Abu Bakar et al., eds., *Historia*, p. 2.
81. Russell Jones, "Ten Conversion Myths from Indonesia", in *Conversion to Islam*, edited by Nehemiah Levtzion (New York, London: Holmes & Meier, 1979), pp. 152ff. Also see Kenneth Hall, "The Coming of Islam to the Archipelago: A Re-Assessment", in *Economic Exchange and Social Intercation in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, edited by K.L. Hutterer (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1977), pp. 217–18.
82. Cf. J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 22; Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 2ff; Reid, "The Islamization of Southeast Asia", p. 16.
83. Cf. Stephen C. Headley, "*Sembah/Salat*: The Javanisation of Islamic Prayer; The Islamisation of Javanese Prayer", in *Islamic Prayer across the Indian Ocean: Inside and Outside the Mosque*, edited by D. Parkin and S.C. Headley (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), p. 169.
84. David Parkin, "Inside and Outside the Mosque: A Master Trope", in D. Parkin and S.C. Headley, eds., *Islamic Prayer*, p. 3.
85. Hall, "Local and International Trade", pp. 217ff.
86. Sebastian R. Prange, "The Social and Economic Organization of Muslim Trading Groups on the Malabar Coast, twelfth to sixteenth centuries" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2008).
87. Cf. Ulrike Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History", in *Hadhrami*

Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s, edited by U. Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 29–34; Engseng Ho, "Before Parochialization: Diasporic Arabs Cast in Creole Waters", in *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by H. de Jonge and N. Kaptein (Leiden: Koninklijk Institut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Press, 2002), pp. 11–35.

88. R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), p. 110, n.3.
89. Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), p. 125; cf. Stephen F. Dale, "The Hadhrami Diaspora in South-Western India: The Role of the Sayyids of the Malabar Coast", in Freitag and Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadhrami Traders*, pp. 175–84.
90. Gibb, ed., *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, IV, pp. 803, 809, 877, 878.
91. Cf. Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 165ff. Also see Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism*, and Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).
92. R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, "Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam", *Archipel* 70 (2005): 185–208.
93. Ibid., pp. 202ff.; cf. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 40–44, and Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World*, pp. 69–80.
94. Ulrike Freitag, "Islamische Netzwerke im Indischen Ozean", in *Der Indische Ozean: Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum*, edited by D. Rothermund and S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (Wien: Verein für Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Promedia, 2004), p. 61: "konkrete Verflechtungen von Handel, Gelehrsamkeit und bisweilen auch Politik".
95. Cf. Michael N. Pearson, *Pious Passengers: The Hajj in Earlier Times* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1994).
96. The notion that the sources of Southeast Asian Islam lie in India as much as the Middle East has first been advanced by Snouck Hurgronje; see his *The Acehnese*, 2 vols, translated by A.W.S. O'Sullivan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906).
97. Laffan, "Finding Java", p. 54.
98. For recent surveys of Indian Ocean historiography, see Markus P.M. Vink, "Indian Ocean Studies and the New Thalassology", *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 1 (2007): 41–62; Dietmar Rothermund, "Zur Historiographie des Indischen Ozeans", in Rothermund and Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, eds., *Der Indische Ozean*, pp. 271–86; Sebastian R. Prange, "Scholars and the Sea: A Historiography of the Indian Ocean", *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1382–93.
99. William G. Clarence-Smith, "Editorial — Islamic History as Global History", *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 2 (2007): 131; cf. Richard M. Eaton, "Islamic

History as Global History," in *Islamic & European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*, edited by M. Adas (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 1–36. The momentum this intellectual project is gaining may be judged by the fact that two scholars of Southeast Asian Islam see it necessary to warn of the pendulum swinging too far. They remind us that "while there is no denying the historical relevance of India (or indeed Indians) in the transmission of Islam to Southeast Asia, this should not prevent us from also appreciating the potential importance of other, more direct, connections between Southeast Asia and the Arab-speaking lands of Islam"; Feener and Laffan, "Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean", p. 204.

100. Cf. Jan Heesterman, "The Tides of the Indian Ocean, Islamization and the Dialectic of Coast and Inland", in *Circumambulations in South Asian History: Essays in Honour of Dirk H.A. Kolff*, edited by J. Gommans and O. Prakash (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 29.

3

CIRCULATING ISLAM
Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic Traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara

Torsten Tschacher

> I praise our father, esteemed in all directions,
> In Bengal and China, Malacca and Arabia.
>
> Sam Shihab al-Din b. Sulayman, *Rasul Malai,* 101[1]

When the Muslim scholar Sam Shihab al-Din b. Sulayman composed these lines in his native Tamil language sometime in the late seventeenth century, there was more than mere hyperbole to the list of countries where his father, the scholar and Sufi Sulayman b. Sadaq, was allegedly honoured. The coastal regions of southeastern India where Shihab al-Din's hometown of Kayalpattinam is located were connected through networks of trade and pilgrimage to all the countries mentioned, showing the poet's deep awareness of the wider world inhabited by Muslim communities. His own native land was known to early Arab geographers as Ma'bar or "Crossing Point", referring to the country along the coast eastward from either Quilon or Cape Comorin, that is, roughly the area of the modern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.[2] In contrast to its western neighbour Malabar, Ma'bar has received little attention from

scholars of Islam, its Islamic traditions appearing too "localized" to be of much interest for the history of the wider Islamic world.

The main exception to this trend has been the interest shown in the Tamil-speaking Muslim communities of South India and Ceylon by students of Southeast Asian Islam. Already in the late nineteenth century, South Indian origins for Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago had been considered by some scholars. Later, scholars such as G.E. Marrison and G.W.J. Drewes specifically pointed to Ma'bar as the region from which Islam had spread to Nusantara.[3] They called for a closer study of Islamic traditions in Ma'bar, but their call was largely left unheeded, partly due to the fact that the few scholars who did research on Ma'bari Islamic traditions were much keener to stress their localized, "Tamil" character, than to place them in the wider context of transnational Islamic cultural and religious networks. When the search for the supposed single place of origin of Southeast Asian Islam was abandoned as most scholars recognized it to be based on faulty assumptions, interest in the Islamic traditions of Ma'bar similarly receded. As a result, up to now, the large-scale presence of Tamil-speaking Muslim traders in the ports of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula in the last five centuries has largely been seen as inconsequential to the history of Islam in Southeast Asia.

The aim of this chapter is not to review the arguments for or against a South Indian "origin" of Southeast Asian Islam. On the contrary, its main aim is to refocus scholarship from the preoccupation with "origins" and the underlying diffusionist discourse, to a more nuanced understanding of the "connected history", to use a term suggested by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, of Islamic traditions in Ma'bar and Nusantara.[4] This chapter argues that "circulation" is a term better suited to understand Islamic traditions in South India and Southeast Asia than "diffusion" or even "transmission". "Circulation" does not imply a single diffusion of a ready-made cultural formation, but the movement back and forth of people, goods, and ideas across space and time. In the process of circulation, the circulated entities may get transformed and become the agents of still further transformation, leading to peculiar patterns of convergence and divergence within a "circulatory regime". As this chapter will show, Islamic traditions were part of just such a circulatory regime that has linked Ma'bar and Nusantara since at least the fifteenth century.[5]

SHARED WORLDS: ISLAM IN MALAYO-TAMIL NETWORKS

Despite the almost contemporary development of Muslim societies on both sides of the Bay of Bengal, there is as yet no evidence for links between the

Muslim communities of Ma'bar and Nusantara dating before the fifteenth century. A Sumatran grave of a certain Na'ina Husam al-Din b. Na'ina Amin dating to 1420 is the first tangible evidence for the presence of Tamil-speaking Muslims in Southeast Asia.[6] From that time onwards, the evidence for the presence of Ma'bari Muslims in Nusantara grows steadily, peaking between 1650 and 1850. Yet linkages between both regions were no one-way roads. Muslim soldiers, convicts, exiles, and slaves from Nusantara were present in Ceylon from the mid-seventeenth century onwards as a result of Dutch activities — even the important scholar, Yusuf al-Maqassari, was banished to the island by the Dutch between 1684 and 1693. Contact between Tamil-speaking and Southeast Asian Muslims thus did not only occur in the Archipelago, but also in South Asia.[7]

As research on the networks linking Muslim communities in South India and Southeast Asia has generally focused on trade, the concurrent circulation of religious notions and practices has not yet received much attention. We know little about the actual people who circulated Islam among both regions, nor about the interrelationship of the various textual traditions which preserve most of the evidence of the circulatory process currently known. Earlier diffusionist scholarship posited a simple, unidirectional relationship between South Indian "senders" and Southeast Asian "receivers" of Islamic traditions, sifting through material in search for evidence of this relationship while ignoring any evidence that could upset this simplistic model. Yet the patterns of convergence and divergence in Islamic traditions of the Bay of Bengal littoral do not follow ethnic, linguistic, or economic fault-lines, a fact well exemplified by the family history of the Malay writer Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir "Munsyi" (1796–1854). Abdullah's paternal grandfather had been the son of a Yemeni Arab and a Tamil woman. His mother's kin, in contrast, had been Tamil Hindus settled in Kedah and had only converted to Islam when they shifted to Malacca sometime in the eighteenth century.[8] This complex history of ethnic diversity, migration, and conversion defies attempts at simplistic categorizations and illustrates that the "transmission" of Islam did not simply proceed along a west-east axis.

The history of the conversion of Abdullah Munsyi's maternal kin is furthermore important for unsettling a relationship central to diffusionist models of religious linkages between different regions of the Muslim World, namely that of the active "missionary" and the passive "convert". Any kind of missionary agent is absent from Abdullah's narrative, putting stress solely on the converted. Yet the "missionary", whether conceived of as an individual or as a community, serves as the prime actor in diffusionist narratives of Islamic history in the Bay of Bengal region, and accounts of "missionary

activities" in primary sources have been among the main evidence marshalled to support the supposed origin of Southeast Asian Islam in one or the other region of the Muslim world. For the "South Indian theory", the main mission narrative has been the account of the conversion of the king of Samudra-Pasai, contained in the Malay chronicles *Hikayat Raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu*, which roughly date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[9] The basic outline of the two accounts, as far as our topic is concerned, is identical: a certain Isma'il, prompted by a prediction of the Prophet, sets sail from Mecca to Sumatra. On the way, Ismail calls at Ma'bari (that is, Ma'bar), which is ruled by a sultan who is a descendant of Abu Bakr. The Sultan adopts the lifestyle of a *faqir* and joins Isma'il on his journey to Sumatra. On arrival there, it is actually the Ma'bari Sultan-turned-*faqir*, not the Arab Isma'il, who converts the king of Pasai to Islam.[10] It is thus hardly surprising that this tradition has been invoked as one of the main arguments in support of a Ma'bari origin of Islam in Nusantara.

It should be obvious that the utilization of a fifteenth-century narrative to reconstruct events of the thirteenth century is fraught with difficulties, but such anachronistic use of evidence is indeed typical for diffusionist arguments about the origins of Southeast Asian Islam, no matter whether Bengali, Chinese, Hadrami, or Tamil origins are posited. More problematic is that by reading a narrative outside its temporal context, important textual dynamics are obscured. In the case of the Pasai conversion narrative, the most noteworthy detail is actually the claim that the Ma'bari Sultan who converted the king of Pasai was a descendant of Abu Bakr, which has some noteworthy parallels in contemporary Tamil tradition. Thus, the town of Kayalpattinam is claimed to have been founded by a descendant of Abu Bakr, a certain Muhammad Khalji from Cairo (al-Qahira). The main source for this legend is a copper-plate inscription claiming to date from the ninth century, which is clearly a forgery dating to the sixteenth century or even later.[11] Yet, that this legend was current in Kayalpattinam in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries can be gauged from the many individuals with the *nisba* al-Qahiri (and, in one case, al-Khalji) mentioned on Kayalpattinam epitaphs of the period, and from the practice of referring to Kayalpattinam as "Kakir" (=Qahir) in Islamic Tamil literature, first documented in a poem dating to 1590.[12] Furthermore, there is also evidence that individuals claimed descent from Abu Bakr, most notably two important Tamil scholars of the seventeenth century, 'Abd al-Qadir of Adirampattinam and Sulayman b. Sadaq.[13] While the sources for these claims require more detailed research, it seems fairly certain that claims to descent from Abu Bakr were common among the Ma'bari religious elites of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries

— exactly the period in which the legend of the Ma'bari Sultan was recorded in Malay chronicles.

These chronicles thus articulated an affirmation of claims brought forward by Ma'bari Muslims in dialogue with competing claims, which may have denied descent from Abu Bakr, or have emphasized the role of other lineages.[14] That Malay chronicles participated in such a dialogue tells us more about the character of Ma'bar-Nusantara interactions than the attempt to reconstruct a history of Islamization from them, for it illustrates how the circulation of individuals, and consequently of goods, ideas, and values between Ma'bar and Nusantara, underpins to some degree the social and cultural development of the maritime Muslim communities of both regions. Our sources do not preserve evidence for Tamil-Malay interaction in the way rock may contain fossilized remains of former life — they are themselves the products of cultural formations shaped by that interaction, and in turn again transformed those formations, leading to unexpected inflections and intersections of discourse, practice, and individual commitments to Islam.

As mentioned, other actors of the circulation of Islam apart from "missionaries" have yet to receive the attention they deserve. These included traders and slaves as much as scholars and Sufis, though our documentation provides information mainly on the role of the latter. One group in particular deserves our attention in future, namely, the petty scholars or educated laymen who served local communities as *imams,* muezzins, or as other minor religious dignitaries. Significantly, these individuals are known by the same term in both Ma'bar and Nusantara, namely as "*Labbai*" (Tamil, *leppai* or *lappai*; Malay and Javanese, *lebai*; Acehnese, *leubè*). Unfortunately, this convergence of terminology on both sides of the Bay of Bengal has been obscured by colonial British census ethnography and contemporary anthropological and historical scholarship, which has constructed the "*Labbai*" as an endogamous Tamil Muslim "community". This "communal" use of the term "*Labbai*" seems to have evolved from the practice of Urdu-speaking Muslims to dub all Tamil-speaking Muslims as "*Labbais*", which led communities of Tamil Muslims who lived in close contact with Urdu-speakers to adopt the term as an identity category. Therefore, the *Labbais* as a community are found mainly in northern Tamil Nadu, whereas in the southern and coastal areas, the term is used generally in reference to petty religious functionaries.[15] The understanding of *Labbai* as a community rather than a societal role has consequently fed into the debates about the diffusion of Islam across the Bay of Bengal, both in support of a west-east, as well as an east-west diffusion.[16]

Yet, pre-colonial sources confirm the original meaning of "*Labbai*" as a religious title rather than a community. The first occurrence of the term in

Tamil literature known to me is as part of the name of a religious scholar praised in a poem of 1648.[17] Several texts probably dating to the eighteenth century are more explicit. The anonymous *Ceytakkati nontinatakam* describes a mosque as a place where "the *Labbais* and Qadis are engaged in recitation", and somewhat later in the same poem, *Labbais* are described in the company of *sharifs*, Arabs, *sayyids*, *shaykhs*, *'alims* and muezzins in Mecca.[18] A much more negative characterization of the *Labbai* is found in a medical treatise by Yakopu Cittar, where the reader is warned not to trust the *Labbais*, who claim to reveal God, but are really out for money.[19] The evidence of Tamil texts is also supported by a contemporary European source. German missionaries active in the Danish entrepôt of Tranquebar from 1706 onwards generally referred to Muslim divines as "*Levi*". That the use of this term was not solely due to drawing analogies between Islam and Judaism, but derived from the colloquial pronunciation *levvai* for *Labbai*, is proven by a letter by missionary Christoph Theodosius Walther: "On May 7, 1727 I visited the Levi, or, *as the Moors write and say*, Lävvai at Boreiar".[20] As these quotes affirm, the Malayo-Tamil *Labbai* performed an important role in local Muslim societies. Whether respected for his knowledge or detested for his capacity to exploit his position as one-eyed among the blind, the *Labbai* was an important catalyst between local communities and the wider circulatory regimes of the Muslim world, acting as a transmitter of practices, notions, and also of texts in both directions.

THE CIRCULATION OF TEXTUAL PRACTICES IN AN ARABIC COSMOPOLIS

As texts provide most of the evidence for the circulation of Islam between Ma'bar and Nusantara, the domain of textual practices, from scribal traditions to elite literary production, offers particularly interesting insights into the process of circulation. This is especially true of those aspects of textual practices which are shaped by the encounter of Muslim cosmopolitan traditions such as Arabic, and the vernaculars. The use of the Arabic script for Tamil and Southeast Asian languages provides a good example of how specific cultural practices were shared, diverged, and shared again over time in the Muslim communities of the Bay of Bengal littoral. Looking at books employing the Arabic script published around 1900 in Malay and Tamil, one immediately notices similarities — besides a preference for a specific *naskhi*-based calligraphic style, the shapes of several letters which have no equivalence in Arabic strongly resemble each other. Thus, both languages employ a letter *p* based on the Arabic letter *f*, differing only in the placement of the additional

dots. This contrasts with Persian, Urdu, and even Malayalam, where a letter based on Arabic *b* is used for *p*. Another example is the letter representing the velar nasal *ng*. (See Colour Plates 4 and 5.)

It is interesting to compare this situation with a manuscript kept at Leiden University Library dated 5 Sha'ban 1192 AH (29 August 1778).[21] The manuscript, probably originating from Sumatra, contains both Tamil and Malay texts apparently written by the same scribe. Incidentally, it is the earliest Tamil manuscript in Arabic script currently known.[22] While we find exactly the two letters for *p* and *ng* as described above in the Malay texts, simple Arabic *f* and *n* are used for those sounds in the Tamil sections. Much like in later lithographs, the Tamil sections are vocalized, while the Malay ones are not. The Leiden manuscript thus demonstrates the underlying similarities of the Arabic script as adopted for Malay and Tamil, but also that by the late eighteenth century, both languages had developed separate conventions for employing the Arabic script. Yet despite these divergences, both variants of the Arabic script remained in contact, as is evinced by the adoption into Tamil of the letter representing the velar nasal, which was taken over directly from Malay in the century intervening between the Leiden manuscript and the late nineteenth century, when the letter appears in Tamil lithographs.[23]

The case of the adoption of the Arabic script among Tamil-speaking Muslims is also interesting because it may have itself been triggered in reaction to the circulatory regimes of the Bay of Bengal littoral. Several theories have been put forward to explain the use of the Arabic script for writing Tamil *beside* the Tamil script. It has been claimed that the Arabic script fostered a Muslim identity and allowed for a better representation of Arabic sounds.[24] Yet, if identity was the prime motivation for the use of the Arabic script, why was it that the Tamil script continued to be used, at times even for rendering the same text?[25] Similarly, there is as yet no corpus-based statistical investigation to prove that the share of Arabic loanwords is significantly higher in texts using the Arabic script compared with those in Tamil script of the same period. Yet when comparing in which contexts the different scripts were used, an interesting pattern emerges. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Arabic script seems to have been used mainly for religious prose works with a decidedly demotic character: manuals of religious law and practice, tracts for women and children, and panegyric poetry meant for regular recitation. Similarly, the prose texts contained in the Leiden manuscript deal with matters such as creed, prayer, or the Muslim calendar, and together constitute a religious compendium not unlike some nineteenth-century manuals. The Arabic script was also used outside "books" proper — in the 1830s, the *qadi*

of Karaikal maintained his Tamil register in Arabic script, and as late as 1925, both parties in a religious controversy in Singapore addressed the public with Tamil handbills in Arabic characters.[26] In contrast, elite literary production such as the long narrative *kappiyam* poems were generally printed using Tamil characters, and this seems also to be true for the few manuscripts of such texts that I have been able to inspect. The rather unexpected demotic pattern of use of the Arabic script makes sense if seen in the general context of Indian Ocean trade, where the Arabic script was commonly used for deeds of sale, contracts, and other documents, and knowledge of it was thus of greater help to traders than knowledge of the Tamil script.

It is hardly necessary to stress the importance of the Arabic language and literature for Islamic textual practices across the Muslim World. Ronit Ricci has recently discussed the participation of Tamil, Malay, and Javanese Muslim writers in what she calls an "Arabicized cosmopolis", following Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock.[27] Ricci emphasizes that the encounter between Arabic and the languages of South India and Southeast Asia was transformative for both, and that the reconstitution of the involved languages as cosmopolitan Arabic and local vernacular was shaped by their interaction. Similar processes are, of course, known from all over the Muslim World. The importance of that cosmopolis, which I still prefer to call "Arabic" rather than "Arabicized", is particularly evident in scholarly networks and lineages, an aspect that has received some attention by students of Southeast Asian Islam, but that has virtually been ignored in studies of Islamic Tamil literature. Like their Malay counterparts, Tamil Muslim scholars clearly saw themselves as part of scholarly lineages which connected them to the Prophet and the original revelation of Islam.

A particularly interesting example is found in Shihab al-Din b. Sulayman's *Rasul Malai*. This poem opens with a long eulogy of a large number of Muslim savants, beginning with the Prophet and ending with the poet's family. The most remarkable aspect of that eulogy is the inclusion, in *Rasul Malai* 95, of the scholar and Sufi al-Qushashi (d. 1661), and his disciple Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1690), who were of central importance for the transmission of Islamic learning to Nusantara in the seventeenth century. Al-Qushashi and al-Kurani are praised along with another scholar, a certain Ibrahim Hawi,[28] just at the point where the poet shifts from the praises of universally known Muslim savants to his own family. Shihab al-Din is claimed to have performed the *hajj* sometime during the seventeenth century, and the placement of al-Qushashi and al-Kurani in the eulogy as the lynchpin linking Shihab al-Din's family with lineages of Muslim scholarship strongly suggests that Shihab al-Din studied with al-Kurani and possibly even with the aged al-Qushashi himself.[29] Malay

and Tamil scholars thus participated in the very same networks of Islamic scholarship during the seventeenth century.

These networks also emerge from a Tamil treatise on Islamic doctrine called *'Izam al-fawa'id fi nizam al-'aqa'id*, possibly completed in 1143 AH (1730/31). Incidentally, this is the first of the Tamil texts contained in Leiden University Library Manuscript OR.7368 mentioned above, and its author, Mahmud b. Muhammad Labbai, better known as Mamu Nayinar or Mahmud Tibi, is also supposed to have been the disciple of Sadaqatullah b. Sulayman, the celebrated elder brother of Shihab al-Din. In the preface to *'Izam al-fawa'id*, Mahmud gives a list of savants on whose works he drew for his treatise. These include al-Ghazzali, al-Nawawi, Ibn al-'Arabi, and 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, but most importantly, also Muhammad b. Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri and Ahmad al-Qushashi.[30] It was precisely the popularity of al-Burhanpuri's mystical treatise *Al-tuhfa al-mursala ila ruh al-nabi* in Southeast Asia that prompted al-Kurani to write a commentary to it. The interaction among Arab, Southeast Asian, and South Indian scholars thus also led to the circulation of certain texts which came to be popular in various places across the Indian Ocean region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[31]

Yet what is involved in the idea of an Arabic cosmopolis is not only a conceptualization of the processes linking a vernacular language to cosmopolitan Arabic, but also how the cosmopolis shaped the engagement of vernaculars with each other. A simple example is offered by loanwords. Arabic loanwords are, of course, a common occurrence in the Muslim idioms of South India and Southeast Asia, but these loans do not just reflect a simple dichotomous relationship between Arabic and vernacular. As I have recently suggested elsewhere, there is a sizeable number of Arabic loanwords in Malay which were most likely borrowed through Tamil or Malayalam. These include those words that exhibit *l* for the Arabic emphatic *z* (for example, Malay *lohor* for Arabic *zuhr*), and those with an additional word-final vowel *-u* or *-i*, a feature also found in loans from Persian.[32] If this theory is correct, Malay would have borrowed much more Arabic words through Tamil than it borrowed actual Tamil words, attesting to the importance of the Arabic cosmopolis in the exchange between both vernaculars and vice versa.

In a different way, the triangular interaction of different vernaculars and cosmopolitan Arabic, and, therefore, the importance of the Arabic cosmopolis for the circulation of ideas among the vernaculars, can be gauged from the theme of "gifts for afterlife" which occurs in two texts from the region, one Javanese and one Tamil. In both texts, Muslims are enjoined to take along "gifts" for different personalities of afterlife such as different angels, the

grave, or the bridge to Paradise, when they die. The "gifts" actually consist, in various ways, of proper behaviour such as praying regularly or honouring one's parents. The Javanese version is found in a sixteenth-century manuscript containing a "miscellany" or *primbon*, while the Tamil version is found in a poem of 1869 by Sayyid Muhammad b. Ahmad, better known as Imam al-'Arus or Mappillai Leppai.[33] While there are many differences in detail between the two versions, there can be no doubt that both texts are based on a tradition that must have been circulating between Ma'bar and Nusantara in the intervening three centuries. But these texts are not simply examples of shared vernacular traditions. By presenting the Prophet as the one who requests the "gifts" for the various recipients, the Tamil version makes explicit that the assignment of certain actions as proper gifts for a particular recipient is based in various prophetic traditions or *hadith*. The theme of "gifts for afterlife" thus emerges as a "vernacularization" of an important cosmopolitan tradition, namely the *hadith* accounts.

Islamic textual traditions certainly offer much potential for future research on the circulation of Islam in the Bay of Bengal littoral, as the "gifts for afterlife" theme or the various Tamil and Malay texts in the Leiden manuscript attest. Such research should not only focus on specific textual traditions, however, but also at the larger processes of textual production, of developments in genres, topics, or the impact of various cosmopolitan traditions. Vladimir Braginsky, for instance, has recently pointed out that from the eighteenth century onward, Malay literature "began to show a preference for the late Arabic model of literary development, rather than for the classical Persian or … Indo-Persian pattern".[34] There are some intriguing details which might suggest comparable developments in Islamic Tamil literature, though earlier than in Malay. Significantly, the only pre-nineteenth-century Islamic Tamil poem to be explicitly based on a Persian model is the very first one, the *Ayiramacala* of 1572. There also seems to have been a great interest in stories about the tragedy of Karbala among Tamil Muslims in the seventeenth century, as evinced by a set of ballads about Qasim b. Hasan with roots in this period, and the *Kanakapiseka Malai* of 1648, regarding the death of Husayn; this latter poem is based on both Arabic and Persian traditions.[35] Eighteenth-century poems, in contrast, generally claim only Arabic models. What connection, if any, exists between the shifting attachments to different cosmopolitan models in Tamil and Malay literature needs to be further elucidated. Yet, there can be no doubt that the two languages both eventually came to inhabit a world in which Arabic was the prime cosmopolitan tradition, a world shaped and changed by the continuous circulation of people, goods, and ideas.

CIRCULATING ISLAM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Some historians have claimed that the nineteenth century saw a dramatic decline in the quantity and quality of Tamil-speaking Muslim involvement with Nusantara.[36] While this characterization may be true with regard to the relative importance of Tamil-speaking Muslims' trade with Southeast Asia in comparison to European and Chinese trade, it is highly misleading in many other regards. Quite in contrast to the negative assessment of historians, the colonial period actually allows us to gauge the circulation of people and ideas between the former Ma'bar (which by the nineteenth century had largely been incorporated into the Madras Presidency) and Southeast Asia to a far greater extent than is possible for the pre-colonial period due to the increasing amount of documentary and physical evidence. The few examples that will be given here focus on the Straits Settlements, especially Singapore, but this does not mean that the circulation of Islam between South India and Southeast Asia was limited to this region.

A very visible reminder of the presence of Tamil-speaking Muslim traders in the Straits Settlements during the colonial period is provided by the numerous mosques and Muslim shrines that came into being through their activities. Seven mosques and a shrine were built and endowed in Singapore by Tamil-speaking Muslims between 1820 and 1920.[37] For Penang, it has been claimed that of about sixty-seven mosques on the island, twenty-two were established by Indian Muslims or Jawi Peranakan, that is, Muslims of mixed Indian-Malay parentage.[38] While in some of the cases, the actual land grant was made by the British government, the money for the construction of the mosque as well as land donated for their upkeep came from South Indians, incidentally casting further doubt on their supposedly dwindling economic resources. Beside the role played by these mosques and shrines in the religious life of the local Muslim population, they are also of interest for art-historical reasons. For instance, the impact of one of South India's most important shrine complexes, the Nagore Dargah, on the architecture of some of the religious structures endowed by South Indians in the Straits Settlements is conspicuous. Among these are not only the two branches of the Nagore Dargah in Singapore and Penang, but also the Masjid Jamae (Chulia) in Singapore and the Keramat Dato Koya in Penang. Bianca Alfieri has suggested further structures in Melaka, Mandalay, and even in several towns in Yemen whose style may have been influenced by the Nagore Dargah. This serves as a reminder that not only people, texts, and religious practices, but also art styles were circulated in the Muslim networks which linked South India and Southeast Asia, though further studies are required before any conclusions can be drawn with confidence.[39]

The impact of Nagore was not limited to architectural styles though. The veneration of Shah al-Hamid, Nagore's saint was apparently so widespread that at least two branches of his shrine were constructed in Southeast Asia, one in Penang and one in Singapore. Devotional practices in honour of the saint seem to have been widely practised among Tamil-speaking Muslims resident in Southeast Asia, among them processions, the observance of holidays, and the recitation of religious poetry. In Penang, Muslims threw valuables pledged to the saint into the sea in the belief that they would be washed up in Nagore a few months later.[40] The veneration of Shah al-Hamid did not remain limited to South Indians. C. Snouck Hurgronje reported that the Acehnese held the saint, whom they called Tuan Meurasab, in high esteem and revered him "as the protector of navigation".[41] Quite in contrast to the sometimes asserted "localism" of Muslim saint veneration, the veneration of saints thus connected regions across the Bay of Bengal.[42]

While the veneration of Shah al-Hamid spread from South India to Southeast Asia, saints buried in the Straits Settlements were included in the devotional practices of Tamil-speaking Muslims. This is most obvious in literature composed in the Straits Settlements, such as a collection of poems published in 1896, entitled *Kirttanattirattu*.[43] Beginning with poems in praise of the Prophet, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, and Shah al-Hamid, the collection continues with nine poems on the patron saints of various Muslim trading towns in the Kaveri Delta region, such as Muttupet and Porto Novo. Finally, the collection's focus shifts to Singapore — one poem is dedicated to a saint buried beside the Masjid Jamae (Chulia), and another one to Habib Nuh, whose shrine is possibly the most popular Muslim shrine in contemporary Singapore. The collection climaxes in a poem, written in Malay using Tamil characters, to Iskandar Shah, supposedly the Sultan of the fourteenth-century kingdom of Temasek, buried at Fort Canning Hill.

This account of saint veneration and devotional practices may suffice to illustrate the extent to which aspects of "popular" Islam traversed the Bay of Bengal. Many other practices — ritual feasting, Muharram processions, recitals of panegyric *mawlid* poetry — were shared among South Indian and Southeast Asian Muslims, creating connected trajectories of religious practice. Yet the latter example also illustrates another important development in the Islamic linkages between southeastern India and Southeast Asia, namely the emergence of an Islamic textual culture in Tamil language in the Straits Settlements. While some Tamil texts may have been composed earlier in Southeast Asia, it is only in the late nineteenth century that we can securely locate Islamic Tamil texts in a Southeast Asian context. This emergence of a Southeast Asian Islamic Tamil textual culture centred on Singapore and Penang

was closely connected to the development of a vernacular print culture and the publication of Tamil newspapers in the Straits Settlements. In Singapore, these included the fortnightly *Tankai Cinekan* or *Tankai Necan*,[44] as well as *Cinkai Varttamani*, *Ñanacuriyan*, and finally the weekly *Cinkai Necan* between 1887–1890, the first Singaporean Tamil newspaper of which a substantial number of copies survive.[45]

What makes these newspapers so interesting is not only that they were published by Muslims, but that they were published by the same printing presses that were also instrumental in the creation of a Malay print culture in the Straits Settlements. *Tankai Cinekan* was issued by the Jawi Peranakan Press, which also published the successful Malay weekly, *Jawi Peranakan*, while *Cinkai Varttamani* and *Cinkai Necan* were run by Denodaya Press, which printed both Malay and non-Muslim Tamil literature. The editors of these papers, therefore, operated at the intersection of both Tamil and Malay Muslim cultural and religious networks. These newspapers were instrumental for the circulation not only of news, but of Islamic discourse in a vast area of South and Southeast Asia. In 1880, the Malay *Jawi Peranakan* had agents in various places of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and even London. It also maintained contacts with *Wazir Indië*, another Malay newspaper published in Batavia.[46] On the Tamil side, *Cinkai Necan* had a similarly wide circulation. While the majority of subscribers were residents of Singapore, the paper was also subscribed by individuals in Batu Pahat, Klang, Kuala Lumpur, and Penang on the Malay Peninsula; Langkat, Medan, Padang, and Sibolga in Sumatra; Porto Novo in India; and Siam. Half a year later, the editor claimed to have subscribers in many of the above-mentioned towns and countries, and added Melaka and Saigon to the list.[47]

Not only did *Cinkai Necan* circulate widely in Southeast Asia, but it also drew on newspapers and journals published elsewhere. The most important of these sources was another Tamil weekly, *Muslim Necan*, which was published from Colombo by Mukammatu Kacim Cittilevvai (1838–98) between 1882 and 1889.[48] Cittilevvai was an important reformer and author of one of the first Tamil novels in European style. In his weekly, Cittilevvai published articles on the North Indian reformer Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98) and promoted educational reforms among Ceylonese Muslims. Of prime importance was his close connection to the exiled Egyptian nationalist leader Ahmad ʻUrabi Pasha (1841–1911), whom Cittilevvai had interviewed for his journal a few days after ʻUrabi Pasha's arrival in Ceylon.[49]

Muslim Necan had subscribers not only in Ceylon and South India, but also in Singapore and Penang. For instance, *Cinkai Necan* published articles taken from or based on *Muslim Necan*, among them many dealing with institutions and personalities of Egyptian Islamic reformist discourse.

These articles are particularly interesting for the "proto-history" of Egyptian reformism in Southeast Asia, as they circulated information on and created awareness of events in Egypt decades before the founding of the Malay journal *al-Imam* in 1906.[50] Conversely, the editor of *Muslim Necan* closely monitored the weekly *Vittiya Vicarini*, established in 1883 in Penang and continued from Nagore from 1888 onwards by Kulam Katiru Navalar (1833–1908), one of the most prolific Tamil Muslim authors of the late nineteenth century.[51] But journalistic links between Ceylon and Southeast Asia were not limited to Tamil newspapers. Indeed, Ceylonese Malays had pioneered journalism among the Muslims of the island through the fortnightly *Alamat Langkapuri*, published from 1869 to 1870. In the late 1890s, another Ceylonese Malay newspaper, *Wajah Selong*, had readers in Singapore, while Singapore had had an important influence on the literary activities of Ceylonese Malays in the mid-nineteenth century.[52]

The circulatory regimes of Muslim editors, Tamil and Malay newspapers, and reformist discourses that criss-crossed the Bay of Bengal in the 1880s clearly demonstrate the importance of the circulation of Islam among South India, Ceylon, and the Malay world in the colonial period. They also illustrate the intricate trajectories of people, goods, practices, and notions which created a connected (and in many aspects shared) Islamic culture on both sides of the Bay of Bengal. Yet, parallel to this process of convergence, the uneven circulation and unique inflections of discourses and practices also engendered diverging tendencies, leading to a complex mosaic of interconnected circulatory regimes. These linkages continued well into the twentieth century and beyond, when increasingly, elements of North Indian Muslim traditions, such as the Ahmadiyya or Tablighi Jama'at movements began to be circulated between South India and Southeast Asia. The late nineteenth century also witnessed the extension of the networks of Tamil-speaking Muslims into further regions of Southeast Asia, notably French Indochina, with South Indian Muslim traders settling in Saigon and Phnom Penh.[53] Even today, a signboard in Lao, English, Arabic, and Tamil guides the faithful to the Friday mosque of the Laotian capital Vientiane. (See Colour Plate 6.)

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to shift the focus of research concerning the relationship of South Indian and Southeast Asian Islamic traditions from the ultimately futile preoccupation with origins towards an appreciation of the dynamic processes which have served to interlink Muslim societies across the Bay of Bengal for at least the last six centuries. Rather than to imagine the transmission of Islamic learning and practices as a simple one-way

diffusion from one place to another, it has been suggested that the model of "circulation" allows for a more nuanced understanding of Islamic traditions in the region as it draws attention to these traditions as part of long-term historical processes rather than as relics of some earlier diffusion. It permits texts, practices, and material culture to be understood as taking part in the actual shaping of Islamic processes in South India and Southeast Asia, and not just as products of prior developments.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, Muslim societies in Ma'bar and Nusantara were connected through networks of traders, scholars, pilgrims, and slaves with each other, as well as with other parts of the Muslim world. It was through these networks that not only goods, but also Islamic notions and practices circulated between both regions. Increasingly, South Indian and Southeast Asian Islamic traditions converged in shared patterns of conversion, religious organization, and engagement with Islamic textual traditions, both Arabic and vernacular. European colonial intervention from the late-eighteenth century onwards may have disrupted the intensity of trade, but not the circulation of Islamic traditions between both regions, which received a fresh impetus through the introduction of new technologies of communication such as printing presses.

The convergence of Islamic traditions in both regions was accompanied by a concurrent process of divergence, as shared customs were transformed and inflected in divergent ways in dispersed geographical settings and fed back into the circulatory regime. It is, therefore, necessary to focus not only on the similarities, but also on the differences in religious outlook and practice between Tamil-speakers and their Southeast Asian counterparts, as these differences point to the limits of circulation and thus throw light on the social constitution of the networks in which Islamic traditions circulated. It should not be forgotten that the actual space in which such traditions circulated between Ma'bar and Nusantara was largely limited to trading towns on or near the coast. Yet at the same time, these divergences only become intelligible against a background of substantial sharing of religious traditions that has been continuing for several centuries and has linked the Muslims of Ma'bar and Nusantara in a common circulatory regime of Islamic thought and practice.

Notes

1. Text taken from Muhammad Yusuf Labbay, ed., *Usul al-asna fi husul al-husna* (Madras: Matba'a Shah al-Hamidiyya 1352 AH), Part 1, pp. 189–216; all translations in this chapter are mine unless noted otherwise.
2. Cf. S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India* (Madras: University of Madras, 1942), pp. 53–56.

3. G.J.W. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?", *BKI* 124 (1968); G.E. Marrison, "The Coming of Islam to the East Indies", *JMBRAS* 24, no. 1 (1951). Cf. also Kenneth R. Hall, "The Coming of Islam to the Archipelago: a Re-Assessment", in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, edited by Karl L. Hutterer (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, 1977).
4. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997).
5. For the terms "circulation" and "circulatory regime", cf. Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Introduction: Circulation and Society under Colonial Rule", in *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia 1750–1950*, edited by Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), pp. 2–3.
6. Cf. Drewes, "New Light", p. 435 note 4. The title *nayinar* (=*na'ina*, *nayna*) occurs frequently in the names of Tamil-speaking Muslims throughout recorded history; cf. e.g. Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 275–90; it is also occasionally found in Malabar, but generally seems to connote a much lower status there than on the east coast; cf. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*, revised edition (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992), p. 254.
7. For Tamil Muslims in Nusantara, cf. Barbara Watson Andaya, "The Indian *Saudagar Raja* (The King's Merchant) in Traditional Malay Courts", *JMBRAS* 51, no. 1 (1979); Sinnappah Arasaratnam, "The Chulia Muslim Merchants in Southeast Asia, 1650–1800", *Moyen Orient et Océan Indien* 4 (1987); J. Raja Mohamad, *Maritime History of the Coromandel Muslims: A Socio-historical Study on the Tamil Muslims 1750–1900* (Madras: Government Museum, 2004), pp. 147–94. For Malays in Ceylon, cf. Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern* "Ulama" *in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin; and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 98–99; B.H. Hussainmiya, *Orang Rejimen: The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1990).
8. Cf. Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir, *Hikayat Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, Munshi* (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1960), pp. 3–5; I have to thank Dr Jan van der Putten, Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, for clearing some doubts regarding the passage.
9. *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, edited by Russell Jones (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1987), pp. 13–17; *Sejarah Melayu: The Malay Annals*, edited by Cheah Boon Kheng and Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail (Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1998), pp. 105–08; cf. also Vladimir Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres,*

Writings and Literary Views (Leiden: KITLV Press, and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 92–111; Fritz Schulze, *Abstammung und Islamisierung als Motive der Herrschaftslegitimation in der traditionellen malaiischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), pp. 24–28.

10. Marrison, "Coming of Islam", pp. 29–31; Schulze, *Abstammung*, pp. 85–89.
11. Raja Mohamad, *Maritime History*, pp. 81–82; the text of the inscription is given ibid. pp. 336–37; cf. also Muhammad Yousuf Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic 1710–1960* (Madras: Ameera and Co., 1974), pp. 51–52; Dr G. Vijayavenugopal, epigraphist, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Pondicherry, considers the inscription to date most probably from the eighteenth century, on account of style and contents; personal communication, 23 August 2007.
12. *Mikuracumalai* 17, edited by Em.Ar.Em. Apturrahim and Em.Ar.Em. Mukammatu Mustapa (Madras: Yunivarsal Paplisars ant Pukcellars, 1983); for epitaphs, cf. Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture*, pp. 275–90; Shokoohy seems to have been unaware of the legend, and, therefore, mistakenly considers individuals named al-Qahiri to be Egyptians.
13. Kokan, *Arabic and Persian*, pp. 52–53; Shokoohy also mentions an epitaph of a certain Nuh al-Bakkari [sic], unfortunately without giving details; Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture*, p. 70; cf. also the legend about a *Ma'bari* saint buried in Kerala; ibid. p. 241.
14. For the notion of texts as "dialogical moments", cf. Ronald Inden, "Introduction: From Philological to Dialogical Texts", in *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*, edited by Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 11–15.
15. Cf. Frank S. Fanselow, "Muslim Society in Tamil Nadu (India): An Historical Perspective", *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 10, no. 1 (1989); Raja Mohamad, *Maritime History*, p. 77; Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 7 vols. (Madras: Government Press, 1909), IV, pp. 198–205; Torsten Tschacher, *Islam in Tamilnadu: Varia* (Halle: Institut für Indologie und Südasienwissenschaften der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2001), pp. 86–90.
16. For example, Drewes, "New Light", pp. 458–59; J.B.P. More, *Muslim Identity, Print Culture, and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004), pp. 20–21.
17. *Kanakapiseka malai*, *Katavul valttup patalam* 19, edited by Em. Ceyyitu Muhammatu 'Hasan' (Madras: Aintam Ulaka Islamiyat Tamil Ilakkiya Manatu, Kilakkarai, 1990).
18. *Ceytakkati nontinatakam*, 174 and 208–09, edited by S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar (Madras: Madras University, 1939).
19. Quoted in M. Mohamed Uwise, *Muslim Contribution to Tamil Literature* (Madras: Fifth International Islamic Tamil Literary Conference, 1990), p. 9, note 13; concerning Yakopu's date, cf. R. Venkatraman, *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult* (Madurai: Ennes Publications, 1990), pp. 63–64.

20. Quoted in German in Heike Liebau, "Der Islam in Südindien im Spiegel der dänisch-halleschen Missionsquellen", in *Missionsberichte aus Indien im 18. Jahrhundert: Ihre Bedeutung für die europäische Geistesgeschichte und ihr wissenschaftlicher Quellenwert für die Indienkunde*, edited by Michael Bergunder (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 1999), p. 166; emphasis added.
21. OR.7368; I have to thank the staff at Leiden University Library for allowing me to inspect the manuscript and providing me with a microfilm. The content of the manuscript is described in Ph.S. van Ronkel, *Supplement-catalogus der Maleische en Minangkabausche handschriften in de Leidsche universiteits-bibliotheek* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1921), pp. 293–94.
22. Several elements in the orthography of the Tamil portions show that this was not an *ad hoc* attempt to write Tamil in Arabic script, but an example of an already well-developed tradition.
23. Cf. e.g. Nuh b. ʿAbd al-Qadir Labbay al-Qahiri, *Fath al-majid fi hadith al-nabi al-hamid* (Bombay: al-Matbaʿa al-Husni 1295 AH).
24. Tayka Shuʿayb, *Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu: A Study of the Contributions of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu to Arabic, Arwi, Persian and Urdu Languages*, Literature and Education (Madras: Imamul ʿArus Trust, 1993), pp. 87–89; cf. also J.B.P. More, *Muslim Identity*, pp. 60–61; Ronit Ricci, "Translating Conversion in South and Southeast Asia: The Islamic '*Book of One Thousand Questions*' ", in Javanese, Tamil and Malay (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2006), pp. 225–38.
25. Ricci's recent attempt to explain both the use of the Arabic and the Tamil script through a theory of identity is interesting, but requires more evidence; cf. Ricci, "Translating Conversion", p. 236.
26. Cf. Bashir A. Mallal, *Trial of Muslim Libel Case* (Singapore: C.A. Ribeiro & Co., 1928), pp. 13–23; More, *Muslim Identity*, 265–82; M. Julien Vinson, "L'écriture Arabe Appliquée aux Langues Dravidiennes", *Journal Asiatique* 9, no. 5 (1895), pp. 153–61.
27. Ricci, "Translating Conversion", pp. 379–400.
28. It is possible that a dot was dropped below the letter *h* in the name "Hawi" in the course of the transmission of the text, so that the name of this scholar may actually read as "Ibrahim Jawi", suggesting even closer links between Shihab al-Din and Southeast Asian Muslim scholars; I have to thank Dr Florian Schwarz, Assistant Professor, University of Washington, for this suggestion.
29. Cf. Shuʿayb, *Arabic, Arwi and Persian*, p. 480; on al-Qushashi, cf. Azra, *Origins*.
30. Leiden University Manuscript OR.7368, fol. 5v.
31. Cf. Azra, *Origins*, pp. 40–42; Kokan, *Arabic and Persian*, p. 60; Shuʿayb, *Arabic, Arwi and Persian*, p. 489.
32. Cf. Torsten Tschacher, "Tamil", in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols., edited by Kees Versteegh, vol. 4 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009). The parallel reflex *l* for Arabic emphatic *d* in Malay may also derive from a South

Dravidian language, but could similarly have resulted from direct contacts between Southeast Asia and South Arabia. In any case, the use of *l* for Arabic emphatic *d* and *z* is not due to Persian influence, as is sometimes claimed; cf. Kees Versteegh, "*Dad*", in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols., edited by Kees Versteegh (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), I, pp. 544–45.

33. Javanese text: G.W.J. Drewes, ed., *Een Javaanse Primbon uit de zestiende Eeuw* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), pp. 90–93; partial English translation in Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, eds., *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Manchester: Manchester University Text, 1986), p. 170; Tamil text in: Sayyid Muhammad b. Ahmad, *Maghani mulah al-tibyan fi sharh ma'ani fath al-dayyan* (Bombay: Matba'a Gulzar Hasani 1318 AH), pp. 242–45; cf. Torsten Tschacher, "How to Die Before Dying? Shari'a and Sufism in a 19th Century Arabic-Tamil Poem" (unpublished paper).
34. Braginsky, *Heritage*, p. 374.
35. Cf. *Ayiramacala*, *Katavul valttup patalam* 31, edited by Em Saiyitu Muhammatu 'Hasan' (Madras: Em. Itris Maraikkayar, 1984); *Kanakapiseka Malai*, *Katavul Valttup Patalam* 17.
36. Cf. Andaya, "*Saudagar Raja*", p. 34; Kenneth McPherson, "Chulias and Klings: Indigenous Trade Diasporas and European Penetration of the Indian Ocean Littoral", in *Trade and Politics in the Indian Ocean: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Giorgio Borsa (Delhi: Manohar, 1990), pp. 43–44; Raja Mohamad, *Maritime History*, pp. 227–38.
37. Cf. Ahmad bin Mohamed Ibrahim, *The Legal Status of the Muslims in Singapore* (Singapore: Malayan Law Journal, 1965), pp. 43–61.
38. Helen Fujimoto, *The South Indian Muslim Community and the Evolution of the Jawi Peranakan in Penang up to 1948* (Tokyo: ILCAA, Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku, 1988), p. 79.
39. Bianca Maria Alfieri, "Il complesso religioso di Nagore nel Tamil Nadu", *In memoria di Francesco Gabrieli (1904–1996): Supplemento n.2 alla Rivista degli studi orientali* 71 (1997), pp. 8–15.
40. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 93–94; Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, "Lasting Charisma", *Pulau Pinang: A Guide to the Local Way of Life & Culture of Penang* 1, no. 2 (1989); C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, 2 vols., translated by A.W.S. O'Sullivan (Leiden: E.J. Brill and London: Luzac & Co., 1906), vol. 1, p. 218, note 1; Torsten Tschacher, "From Local Practice to Transnational Network: Saints, Shrines and Sufis among Tamil Muslims in Singapore", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34 (2006): 231.
41. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, vol.1, p. 218.
42. Cf. Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, p. 94; Tschacher, "Local Practice".
43. Mukammatu Aptulkatiru, *Kirttanattirattu* (Singapore: Javippiranakkan, 1896).
44. The words *cinekan* and *necan* both mean "friend"; the first name is quoted as "Tangai Snahen" in E.W. Birch, "The Vernacular Press in the Straits", *Journal of*

the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 4 (1879): 51; the second is quoted in "Katitam", *Cinkai Necan*, 2 July 1888, p. 4.

45. Copies of *Cinkai Necan* are kept in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library of Singapore; cf. "Katitam", *Cinkai Necan*, 2 July 1888, p. 4; cf. also M. Japar Muhyittin, "Cinkappur tamil muslimkalin ilakkiyappani," in *Aintam ulaka islamiyat tamil ilakkiya manatu — Kilakkarai: Cirappu malar* (Kilakkarai: Aintam Ulaka Islamiyat Tamil Ilakkiya Manatu, 1990), pp. 117–18.
46. Birch, "Vernacular Press", p. 53; Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The* umma *Below the Winds* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 145–46.
47. "Nam pattirikai", *Cinkai Necan*, 25 June 1888, p. 206. Lists of subscribers were published on 8, 15, and 22 August, 5 and 19 September, 10 and 17 October, 21 November, and 12 December 1887.
48. This paper is often claimed to have been published in Kandy, but a title page of 1884 reproduced by Samy shows that, at least, at that time, the paper was published in Colombo; cf. A.Ma. Samy, *History of Tamil Journals (19th century)* (Madras: Navamani Pathippakam, 2000), p. 111.
49. A.M.A. Azeez, "Some Aspects of the Muslim Society of Ceylon with Special Reference to the Eighteen-Eighties", in *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies: Kuala Lumpur — Malaysia, April 1966*, 2 vols., edited by Xavier S. Thani Nayagam et al. (Kuala Lumpur: International Association of Tamil Research, 1968–69), vol. 1, pp. 758–60; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature* (Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995), p. 443.
50. E.g. "Ceyku Jamaluttin", *Cinkai Necan*, 17 October 1887, p. 68; "Kairoppattanam", *Cinkai Necan*, 28 November 1887, pp. 91–92; "Mukammatu Ali Pasa", *Cinkai Necan*, 10 June 1889, pp. 189–90, and *Cinkai Necan*, 15 July 1889, p. 12; cf. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood*, pp. 148–51.
51. Cf. Azeez, "Some Aspects", p. 760, note 53; Samy, *Tamil Journals*, p. 117; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Lexicon*, p. 370.
52. Hussainmiya, *Orang Rejimen*, pp. 28–29, 145–49.
53. Cf. J.B.P. More, "Pathan and Tamil Muslim Migrants in French Indochina", *Pondicherry University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 1–2 (2000): 113–28.

4

FROM JEWISH DISCIPLE TO MUSLIM GURU
On Literary and Religious Transformations in Late Nineteenth Century Java

Ronit Ricci

When the shared histories of Muslims residing in South and Southeast Asia as well as the diverse and significant connections among them are considered, two regions stand out as being especially interconnected: Southeast India and the Indonesian Archipelago. The coasts of these regions were part of the Indian Ocean's commercial network that was permeated by an Islamic ethos; where goods and shared texts and values crossed the seas carried by Muslim merchants, pilgrims, soldiers, and scholars, and where coastal towns, which functioned as important trade centres and ports, developed into major centres of Islamic learning and culture.

The Muslims of South India and the Indonesian Archipelago shared a variety of relationships, including a shared set of pilgrimage sites, some of which are still popular today. Trade contacts, especially between Muslims residing along the Coromandel coast and those living along the coasts of Java and Sumatra, flourished, with the Nagore-Aceh route becoming one of the most profitable in the eighteenth-century networks. Similar Islamic educational institutions developed in both regions, a shared *madhhab* was followed, and intermarriage was not uncommon.[1] During the colonial period contacts continued in the form of the employment, deployment and exile of subjects.[2]

Much of the evidence for these contacts comes to us from accounts by travellers such as Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, archeological finds, and local historical and literary sources. If we look to the latter, we find the Archipelago mentioned in early Sanskrit and Tamil works, as well as South Indian *Sufi* literature.[3] India is often mentioned in Javanese and Malay literature as the land "above the winds". Many similarities exist between the Javanese tales of the *wali sanga* (the nine "saints" credited with bringing Islam to Java), and of Tamil teachers fulfilling the same mission.[4]

In this chapter I present and discuss a narrative that features prominently in the literary traditions of Muslims in both South India and the Indonesian Archipelago, known as the *Book of One Thousand Questions*. My focus here is on its dissemination and transformation in Java. Although it will be shown below that it was embedded within the particularities of Javanese history and culture, it is important to remember that beyond its local dimensions it was also the kind of work that connected South and Southeast Asian Muslims across boundaries of geography and culture and, along with multiple other translocal links, contributed to the sustained religious and intellectual vitality of these important regions of the Muslim world.

JAVA IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Many changes were taking place on Java in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among them were the gradual dismantling of the Cultivation System, the rising number of Javanese embarking on the *hajj*, the anti-Dutch peasant uprising that began in Banten and spread widely, the budding nationalist movement, and the implementation of new policies in the fields of education, labour, land ownership, and political representation.

This chapter addresses yet another change, less well known, but nonetheless intriguing and indicative of larger trends: a shift in a long-familiar literary corpus which was infused with new meaning at this particular historical moment, reconfigured in a way that placed Javanese Islam at its centre. I examine the literary changes and offer an interpretation that ties them to broader social processes unfolding in Java at the time. I begin with a brief introduction to the literary corpus and its history, before turning to its transformation in the late nineteenth century.

THE *BOOK OF ONE THOUSAND QUESTIONS*

The *Serat Samud* (*Book of Samud*) is a Javanese translation of a story well known across the Muslim world, usually titled the *Book of One Thousand*

Questions. The book depicts a dialogue between the Prophet Muhammad and an important Jewish leader by the name of Abdullah Ibnu Salam in seventh-century Arabia. Versions differ across and within languages, but the basic outline remains quite constant: the Jewish leader, described as wise and revered, receives a letter inviting him to meet with Muhammad. After creating a list of questions based on the scriptures, he, along with seven hundred of his followers, go to Medina where Muhammad awaits them. Ibnu Salam asks his questions, spanning diverse topics which range from ritual to genealogies to theology and mysticism. Upon hearing the replies, Ibnu Salam is persuaded that Muhammad is indeed the seal of the prophets whose coming is believed to have been foretold in the Jewish scripture, and thereupon converts to Islam.

This basic narrative, which seems in some ways deceptively simple, has been known since at least the tenth century and has roots in early *hadith* collections such as those by Imam Muslim and Ibn Hisham.[5] Originally composed in Arabic, its translation history is complex and wide-ranging and includes, among others, translations and adaptations into Turkish, Latin, Malay, Tamil, French, Dutch, Persian, and Hindi. Different versions, produced in diverse places and periods, reveal much about particular concerns and agendas played out in Muslim communities engaged with this story.

In South and Southeast Asia the story circulated in several languages since the sixteenth century at the latest.[6] Although there is inconclusive evidence as to its exact transmission history, we know that Malay and Tamil versions were translated from Persian sources (likely produced in South India) and that in certain sites, such as Palembang in Sumatra, both Javanese and Malay manuscripts of the *Book* were produced. The agendas of different Muslim communities in these regions are evident, for example, in the Tamil *Book of One Thousand Questions* in which we see an emphasis on a rejection of many local customs deemed un-Islamic, likely stemming from the Muslim minority's need to clearly set boundaries with the surrounding society; Malay versions of the Book tend to be infused with Arabic, and indicate the importance for that tradition of maintaining a close relationship with the Arabic-Persian literary prototype.[7]

A CONVERSION STORY

The *Book of One Thousand Questions* presents its audience with a vast range of details, touching upon multiple themes relating to Islam. It does, however, have a single thread which runs through it and which provides a rationale for

assembling so much within a single book: at its heart lies the process and act of religious conversion. Many times throughout the story — and this is true for most versions — Ibnu Salam affirms the Prophet's words as true until finally, at the very end, he announces that he wishes to become a Muslim himself. He then recites the *shahada* and receives Muhammad's blessing.

Such a story may have initially been deemed appropriate for the newly converted, offering them a model of religious transformation that emphasized questioning, attaining knowledge, persuasion, the relationship with a *guru* (the ultimate *Guru*), and the Prophet's central role in Islam. This model also presented — in encapsulated form — many of the topics pertaining to Muslim identity, such as the practice of major ritual obligations and a belief in God's oneness.

Even if the story did play a role, initially, in instructing converts, it is clear that it continued to be read and reproduced even after the majority of its audiences were already Muslim, perhaps for several generations. In these circumstances, the question arises as to what, in fact, may have been the rationale for continuing to tell this conversion story to Muslims.

Several reasons come to mind: a didactic purpose of conveying Islamic teachings, practices, and history by way of an encyclopaedia text, highlighting the bonds between *guru* and disciple which formed the backbone of education and transmission in many circles, retelling of a glorious historical moment in the Prophet's life, and re-emphasizing the significance of becoming and remaining a Muslim. In addition, the process of telling and retelling the story provided an opportunity for local authors and scribes to recentre their own versions within particular cultural contexts. In Java, where by the nineteenth century the majority of the population professed Islam, the *Book* was clearly, as we might say, preaching to the converted.

THE *BOOK OF ONE THOUSAND QUESTIONS* ON JAVA

At least two dozen, and likely more, *Book of One Thousand Questions* texts in Javanese were produced or copied between the early eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Most were titled *Samud* or *Serat Samud*, using Ibnu Salam's common name in Java. Pijper, in his 1924 book on Malay versions of the story, assessed the earliest extant Javanese manuscript, found at the Leiden University library, as dating from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, while another manuscript copied in Surakarta in the 1930s, and found in the University of Indonesia library in Jakarta,[8] is among the most recent produced.

Although we cannot declare this with absolute certainty, the *Book* is likely to have reached the Indonesian Archipelago by way of south India. As

is typical of Javanese manuscripts, the author's name, the date, and place of inscription are rarely mentioned explicitly in the text itself. We do, however, know that these texts were produced both within and outside of court circles in Central Java and elsewhere, and that they were written in both the Javanese and Arabic (*pegon*) scripts.

These Javanese tellings of the Ibnu Salam story were both similar to, and different from, the story as told elsewhere. Many central doctrinal, ritual, and historical elements were retained by Javanese authors. Examples include discussions of the five daily prayers, the meaning of faith (*iman*), depictions of prophets such as Musa and Yunus, their lives and achievements. The story was localized in Java through various details such as the mention of the five-day *pasaran* calendrical cycle, the translation of many Arabic words and phrases into Javanese within the text, and the employment of *macapat* poetic meters.

The central theme, however, by which the story took on a Javanese feel and emphasis, was the centrality accorded within it to Javanese-Islamic mystical teachings. Focusing on such themes, and writing in the vocabulary of many other Javanese poems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the *Book of One Thousand Questions* appears, in many ways, as a classical poem of the *suluk* genre.

Suluk (from Arabic *suluk*, "traversing [the sufi path]") are mystical Javanese-Islamic poems that typically address God's relationship with His creation (and humanity in particular), death and life, and the path to perfected knowledge. Strongly influenced by Ibn al Arabi's writings as they found their way to the Archipelago, as well as the doctrines of several dominant sufi orders in the region and local mystical teachings, they appear in numerous Javanese manuscripts, which attests to their central cultural role.[9]

In Javanese manuscripts of the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, the questions of God's nature, His unity, and relationship to the world and its creatures, are pivotal. Such themes are tackled through recurring queries, initiated by Ibnu Salam, allowing the Prophet to dwell on these themes, central to Javanese Islam. A further, more dramatic, transformation of the story — to which I now turn — unfolded in late nineteenth century Java.

LITERARY TRANSFORMATIONS: A TALE OF CONVERSION, A CONVERTED TALE?

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, new, transformed versions of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* story began to be produced on Java, in which the Prophet, the Jew, and conversion to Islam no longer appeared. The rise

of these new versions closely corresponded temporally with a decline — and possible ceasing — of production of the older *Samud* story.

The transformed versions are titled *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam*, with the protagonist bearing the Javanized form of the Arabic title of *seikh* and an almost identical name as his "ancestor" Abdullah Ibnu Salam. Seh Ngabdulsalam is a *guru* whose disciples (who are also his sons) come to him with questions. Many of the themes Seh Ngabdulsalam discusses remain the same as before — signifying their ongoing relevance — but the rationale of embracing Islam is no longer what drives the story, since both teacher and disciples are all Muslims. We may think of this text as a *lakon cabang*, or branch story, of the type branching out of the Mahabharata tales in shadow puppet theatre performances on Java, both connected to the literary trunk and extending away from it.

A brief comparison between the two variants of the Ibnu Salam story reveals that the basic format of a question and answer debate remains intact.[10] In both texts, a knowledgeable, venerable teacher bestows his teachings to a disciple (or several), coming to him with questions and eager to learn. Common topics discussed include *iman* and Islam, the daily prayers, the four stages of the path, God's names, actions, attributes and essence, God's Unity, the prophets, God's light, and the relationship between the world and the human body.

Some topics which consistently appeared in the older *Book of One Thousand Questions* versions did not find their way into the reworked story of the *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam*. These include, among others, paradise and hell, Mt. Kap, God's throne, the angels, the stars, the earth's navel, the fate of infidel children, the Day of Judgment, the story of Musa and Pirngon (Pharaoh), the seven grades (*martabat pitu*), and the spirit.[11]

While some of the more traditional topics do not appear in Seh Ngabdulsalam's story, it does present some interesting new additions: the *gamelan* ensemble and its music, as well as the *wayang* shadow puppet theatre, are debated. The art of accompanying the *gamelan* with vocal music (*nyindhen*), and the Javanese *tledhek* and *tayuban* dances are mentioned, as are the origin and destination of creation (*sankanparan*), central to many Javanese works. The inclusion of all these diverse and culturally-contextualized themes among Seh Ngabdulsalam's teachings gives the text a flavour much different from the more translocal *Seh Samud*.

I have so far looked at some of the ways in which the story of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* — a question and answer dialogue on Islamic themes between teacher and disciple — changed in Java over time to the point where, although many of its structural and thematic elements remained intact, the

narrative's conversion-rationale had been altered. Why did a story long told about a Jewish leader conversing with the Prophet and embracing Islam mutate to one of a Javanese *guru* replying to his sons' questions, a conversation in which all the participants were Muslim from the start? Why and how was the conversion element, central to the earlier story, reworked under changing circumstances? Or had the theme of the story shifted altogether, making the topic of conversion obsolete?

I would like to suggest that we think of the transformed story as presenting an alternative, or rearticulated, discussion of conversion, understood here in the broad sense of the term. No longer a story depicting the historical contest between Judaism and Islam, conversion to Islam was removed as its driving rationale. Interreligious competition and conversion were reconceptualized as the narrative emphasis shifted to intra-Muslim — and intra-Javanese — concerns, tensions, and debates.

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS: CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE CONVERSIONS

In order to consider potential explanations for the shifting emphasis of the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, I now turn to three central developments in late nineteenth century Java: the Islamic revival, the rising importance of *tarekat* (sufi "order", brotherhood), and the accelerating Dutch presence on the island. I then examine possible links between these developments and the text.

As was true for many places around the Muslim world in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Indonesia too witnessed a wave of Islamic religious revivalism, manifesting itself in stricter observance of religious rules and rites, and propaganda aimed at intensifying the power of Islam. Mecca-trained or inspired teachers and pilgrims championed the revival movements in various regions of the Indonesian Archipelago. In Java the movement first arose at the beginning in the 1870s in Banten, where it was connected mainly with the Qadiriyyah order.[12] Indeed, such groups and their teachings were so central to developments in Java that Kartodirjo noted that "the most vital aspect of the religious movement was the revival of Islamic mysticism as embodied in the *tarekat*".[13]

The three *tarekat* of greatest significance in nineteenth-century Java, all revitalized at the time, were the old and well-established Naqshbandiyyah, Qadiriyyah and Shattariyyah. The Shattariyyah, with its strong speculative tendencies and association with Wujudiyyah teachings, which had been the dominant sufi order in Southeast Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries and into the nineteenth, was now being replaced in popularity in some areas by the Naqshbandiyyah-Qadiriyyah, with its reformist emphasis on Islamic law.

Each sufi *tarekat* had its following, rites, and traditions. Such forms of exclusive internal loyalty and community enhanced inter-*tarekat* competition and tensions, as groups competed for followers and influence. As a result, the rivalries among the orders emerged as a significant element of the *tarekat* movement. For example, as Steenbrink has written, a strong enmity arose between the Naqshbandiyyah and the Shattariyyah orders in Western Sumatra. The former accused the latter that their *kiblat* — orientation towards Mecca at prayer time — was incorrect; that their Arabic recitations were wrong; and that their method of determining the onset of the fasting month was questionable. Some Shattariyyah mosques were thus deemed unacceptable as places of worship by Naqshbandiyya *imams*.[14] Such accusations ring of deep theological divisions, and are not unlike those directed at non-Muslims. They suggest that a change from one *tarekat* to another could have been viewed in terms analogous to religious conversion.

Also in the background to changing notions of conversion was the pervasive Dutch presence in Java, which brought in its wake an ongoing, and gradually increasing, exposition to Western ideas and practices.[15] The text's focus on a very local form of Islam which had been typically tolerant of the traditional Javanese arts of music, theatre, and dance which outsiders — such as Dutch scholars or Islamic revivalists may have viewed as "un-Islamic" — points to a need felt to restate the importance of its place within Javanese society.

The strong competition between *tarekat* in nineteenth-century Java, especially in its latter half with the dramatic rise in pilgrim numbers, the Islamic revival, the ensuing growth of the *pesantren* movement, and the reach of Dutch influence, all provide the background for examining contemporary changes in *Book of One Thousand Questions* versions, most notable among them the shift to a story in which conversion to Islam no longer featured.

TRANSFORMED TEACHER, DISCIPLES, AND CHALLENGES

At the centre of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* is the figure of the Prophet, who bestows his knowledge and grace on a formidable challenger who is eager to learn and quick to grasp the extraordinary aspects of the Prophet's nature and teachings. The Prophet's figure is entirely absent from the Javanese

Suluk Ngabdulsalam, replaced by a Javanese *guru* who, although capable and wise, cannot be compared with Muhammad. In fact, Seh Ngabdulsalam is depicted as resembling the disciple Ibnu Salam much more closely than he does the *guru* Muhammad as he appeared in earlier versions.[16] Whereas the Prophet draws on inspiration from the Archangel Jibrail to reply swiftly and correctly to all of Ibnu Salam's questions, Seh Ngabdulsalam receives no such divine assistance. The Prophet sits in the mosque, where Ibnu Salam meets him and where the entire narrative unfolds in a single location. Seh Ngabdulsalam also receives his disciples, but they come and go continuously, supplying the narrative with some sense of mobility; whereas the debate with the Prophet seems to be taking place almost outside of time — with no mention of its passing despite the hundreds of questions asked — the visits by Seh Ngabdulsalam's sons punctuate the cycles of day and night with their visits. Instead of Samud, the sole Jewish disciple of the Prophet, Seh Ngabdulsalam has a series of disciples/sons who approach him with questions. These sons come from distant and diverse locales, in order to pose a question or two each to their father, who replies at length.[17]

The sons not only come from various places, including India, Singapore, and several locales on Java, but — and this is central to my discussion — they possess one of two different types of knowledge: Arab or Javanese. Whereas the disciple Ibnu Salam was described as a great scholar of the ancient scriptures — referring above all to the *toret* — the sons are depicted as *weneh alim* or *weneh Jawa*: some are *alim* — Islamic religious scholars — and some are endowed with Javanese wisdom. These designations are defined in the text: *kang ngalim kitabe luwih* — the *alim* are experts on *kitab*, works in the disciplines of the Islamic religious sciences derived from Arabic sources; *kang Jawa sugih kawignyan* — the Javanese possess a wealth of wisdom.[18] The distinction seems to run along the lines of both language per se — Arabic and Javanese — but even more so to relate to broader cultural spheres, juxtaposing two perspectives, forms of practice, and repertoires of symbols and references.

The initial part of the book emphasizes Arab forms of knowledge as exemplified by several of the sons citing Islamic sources when posing their questions. They mention either coming across these sources themselves or hearing others quote them at the mosque, and express a desire to understand their meaning. The father too resorts to such books occasionally. Whereas in the earlier *Book of One Thousand Questions* versions in Javanese it is rare to find mention of any prior source besides the Scriptures, here we find seven titles mentioned, among them *Kitab Sanusi*, *Kitab Tapsir*, *Kitab Juwahir*, and *Kitab Usul*.

Citing a *kitab* accords Islamic authority to a particular type of religious knowledge, as seen in the following example:[19]

Tegese kang aran Islam/
wicara Kitab Juwahir/
al Islamu lapel ira/
an taslimu illahi/
dene maknane kuwi/
utawa ta Islam iku/
sayekti pasrah jiwa/
iya raga nira kaki/
marang Allah kang Ngamurba kang Misesa//[20]

In the translation into English, Arabic terms within the Javanese are left as such, so as to reproduce the sense in which the two languages are combined in the original:

The meaning of Islam/
As discussed in *Kitab Juwahir*/
al Islam so goes the Arabic/
an taslimu illahi/
this means that/
Islam is/
truly surrendering soul/
yes and your body my child/
to Allah the Ruler the Almighty//

Such an example clearly acknowledges the centrality and authority of the *kitab* tradition and the type of knowledge and belief system it represents as it connects a common definition of Islam to a well-known textual source in the Arabic language.

After over forty pages, however, a transition occurs in the narrative. The tale of the sons who were depicted as *ahli kitab* ends, and four sons who are known as *ahl ul semita Jawi* — experts in the subtle signs of Javanese teachings — come to the fore. In this section of the text are found themes unknown to the older recensions of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* in Javanese, themes that take the localization of the text on Java a step further. These include the *gamelan* ensemble and its music, the *wayang* shadow puppet theatre, and forms of Javanese dance and singing.

If there is a tension here, in the distinction consistently made between "Arab" and "Java", it is clearly not one between different religions, but rather

between perceptions of what it may have meant to be a Javanese Muslim. Such designations had the potential for being in opposition to one another, overlapping, or engaging in dialogue.[21] Within the text the followers of both are brothers, disciples of a single *guru*, who accepts them all. And yet the division carries a certain significance. Beyond the questions and answers explicitly presented, a debate is taking place about competing interpretations, possible identities, and affiliations.

JAVANESE AND MUSLIM: A CONTRADICTION?

In the final pages of the text Seh Ngabdulsalam struggles with the way in which the four "Javanese" sons are unable to detach themselves from their involvement with traditional Javanese art forms.[22] He is angered by this attachment, which he deems frivolous and even verging on the religiously forbidden, and tries to change their minds by way of threat and persuasion. Unsuccessful, he retires to his home to meditate and emerges with a clear vision and goal: to clarify the origins of *wayang* and *gamelan* to his sons so that they understand a deeper meaning inherent in them, one they have missed due to their worldly preoccupations.

The following section of the text then uses the *gamelan* as a metaphor for Islamic teachings.[23] The *Seh* begins by discussing several types of *gamelan*, including, for example, the *gangsa monggang*, an archaic three-tone *gamelan* kept in the courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, and played on solemn occasions, and the *cara balen*, played to greet guests and accompany the arrival of bride and groom during marriage ceremonies.[24] However, he reminds his sons that even though they are engaged with the *gamelan* they should not forget — or disregard — the four stages of the path: *sarengat*, *tarekat*, *kakekat*, and *makripat*.[25]

The father then offers an interpretation of several *gamelan* instruments and scales. For example, the twenty *bonang* of the *slendro gamelan* are connected with the twenty *sipat* (God's attributes), the *gong*, *kethuk*, *kenong*, and *kempul* are equated with the fourfold division of the attributes and with the four letters of God's name,[26] and the *kendhang* drum is described as a leader, giving the music a beat and direction. A person aspiring to higher knowledge, but still interested in matters of the kingdom, is likened to a *gamelan* without a *kendhang*, suggesting a situation that is misguided and cannot bring about desired results.

Although some details within this section remain obscure, the comparison points to a relationship between the *gamelan* ensemble and Islamic teachings. The *Seh*'s metaphorical interpretation suggests that the *gamelan* is not only as

it seems, and, therefore, the fact that the sons cannot separate from it should neither upset him, as it did initially, nor mean that they are frivolous. On the contrary, they are deeply connected to something which, in fact, represents and embodies central Islamic teachings. In this sense there is no contradiction between "Javanese" and "Arab", but rather they can be understood as one and the same. However, the use of the *gamelan* as metaphor is in itself indicative, as *gamelan* music was shunned in some Javanese Muslim circles, and would likely not be appreciated within them as a symbol of deeper Islamic truths.

AN ALTERED COMPETITION, DIALOGUE AND CONVERSION

I began this essay by noting the striking way in which the *Book of One Thousand Questions* was transformed in Java in the late nineteenth century: From a story relating the historical antagonism between Judaism and Islam, narrated through a dialogue between Samud Ibnu Salam and the Prophet and ending in conversion, to one depicting a Javanese Muslim *guru* in dialogue with his sons who come in search of knowledge, defined broadly as "Arab" or "Javanese".

Having proposed some historical trends that may have impacted the literary transformation in the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, and presented some of the textual references to the altered religious emphasis, I now turn to examine the closing lines of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* and *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* as emblematic of both the literary and religious change — or conversion — which the story underwent.

In most Javanese versions of the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, Ibnu Salam, after many questions, decides he has sufficient proof of Muhammad's genuine prophethood to embrace the new religion. He acknowledges Muhammad, who in turn accepts him as a follower. In several versions he recites the *shahada*, is given a new name, and is blessed by the Prophet. When the text includes mention of the 700 followers who accompanied him, it notes that they, too, all converted to Islam.

The *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* draws to a close with the above-mentioned discussion of the *gamelan*. The *Seh* is asked about the difference between the *pelog* and *slendro* musical scales. *Slendro*, considered the basic scale, with equal intervals and pentatonic, is explained in terms of Islamic terminology. When, at last, the *Seh* addresses the *pelog* scale, he defines it as *sumbang*: somewhat out of tune, shifted, using a word that can also mean "offensive to sight, hearing or moral sense". The *pelog bonang*, *saron*, and *demung* are all out of tune, as are the other instruments. Nevertheless, the *pelog*'s content,

or meaning (*surasa*), is pleasing to the senses, delicious (*eca*), its music sweet and satisfying to the ear.

Immediately following this passage the text concludes with these lines which, in the comparison I am suggesting, offer an alternative, or substitute, to a scene of conversion from Judaism to Islam:

> If you discuss/
> the fine knowledge of *rasa*/
> that emerges from *suluk*/
> without using any Islamic textbooks/
> that is good/
> not opening the great screen/
> of secrets/
> its symbols are not far/
> surely it is delightful in so far as you have not opened the screen//[27]

Coming at the heels of the *pelog* interpretation and employing the same word used to describe it — *eca*, delightful, tasty — the text suggests a comparison between the delicious flavour of the *pelog* and that of *suluk* poetry, and the hidden, true knowledge — *ngelmu rasa* — it expounds. It also hints at a similarity between the seemingly discordant yet gratifying *pelog* and the mystery or secrecy of the *suluk*. More broadly still, a comparison is suggested between the *gamelan* and *suluk*, both veiling and concealing a truth hidden from view, one all the more sweet because of its subtle, unapparent nature.

The passage explicitly counterposes the *kitab*, Islamic textbooks, with the Javanese mystical poetry of *suluk*. According to the author, the refined knowledge, having to do with insight, inner feeling, and true meaning, emerges from the *suluk*, implying that the type of knowledge found in the *kitab* is more formalized and theologically-minded, but cannot touch upon the deeper significance expressed in the *suluk*. This counter position is common in Javanese literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflecting — implicitly or explicitly — the tensions between those more dedicated to the formal observance of Islamic law (*santri*, *ahlul sarak*) and those following a more mystical, sufi interpretation of Islam (*ahlullah*).[28]

The counterposition between *kitab* and *suluk* reiterates what we have seen all along: the two literary forms represent different types of knowledge, different perspectives on Islam. The distinction between them — and the communities they represented — was reflected also in contemporary educational systems and their curriculums: in the *pesantren* religious schools, mystical works were virtually absent from the curriculum in the late nineteenth century, and the stress was on *kitab* of Islamic law and Arabic grammar. The *suluk*-type works

were passed through initiation from *guru* to disciple and were popular among followers of *tarekat*.[29]

The movement of the story is from an "Arab" form of knowledge, to the sons focused on the Javanese arts, to the father trying to "convert" his sons to a new understanding of these arts — deemed questionable by some — by way of presenting the *gamelan* as symbolic of conventional Islamic teachings. Finally, in its concluding lines, the text emphasizes Javanese *suluk* literature and the subtle knowledge that it contains, according both a status above and beyond that of the *kitab*.

The Jewish and Muslim protagonists of older tellings were here replaced with representatives of the categories "Arab" and "Java". As Judaism and Islam shared much that is common in terms of beliefs, practices, and stories, so the *Seh*'s disciples were all brothers, descended from a common father. Very likely it was precisely this proximity, this closeness and familial relationship — between Islam and Judaism, "Arab" and "Java" forms of Islam — that created the tension which propelled the story forward in its two incarnations, since, despite the affinities, something fundamental separated the faiths of Ibnu Salam and the Prophet, as it did the forms of Islam represented by *kitab* and *suluk*.

The parallel between the two sides of the debate in the *Serat Samud* and the *Suluk Ngabdulsalam* is not perfect. And yet, we find in both *Book of One Thousand Questions* branches an emphasis on the importance of two competing views, contested with respect through persuasion, using references common to both but — ultimately — differing in interpretation. From two religions engaged in a dialogue which ends in one overcoming the other, our story shifts to a dialogue between two perspectives on Islam, embodied in the designations "Arab" and "Jawa", the *pelog* and *slendo* scales, *suluk* and *kitab*. An embrace of — or conversion to — the Javanese perspective is deemed the correct choice in the end.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I have suggested above that transformations in the Javanese *Book of One Thousand Questions* corpus should be read in light of religious and cultural developments in late nineteenth-century Java. Among these developments were intra-Islamic relations between various sufi orders, the relationships between more local forms of Islam and revivalist trends, and the increasing Dutch influence on Javanese society and culture.[30]

Although there is no explicit statement of *tarekat* affiliation within the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, it was likely associated with the Shattariyyah,

with its speculative teachings and employment of Javanese arts in metaphorical ways. As the Shattariyyah was being replaced as the most popular sufi order in Java by *tarekat* which more strongly emphasized normative practice and Islamic law, the *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* maintained the ongoing relevance of its teachings to Javanese society. Even if, however, we cannot link the corpus with certainty to a particular *tarekat*, it is clear that Seh Ngabdulsalam's depiction fits that of a nineteenth-century *guru tarekat*, and that in that role he advocated a particular form of Muslim affiliation.[31]

The emphasis on a local form of Islam can also be read as a call for a culture strong enough to recognize and retain its traditions in the face of massive technological, economic, and political change. Conversely, this emphasis may reflect a Javanese acceptance of colonial attitudes that encouraged and even shaped what Dutch scholars and administrators viewed as the "essence of Javanese-ness", including the focus on mysticism, poetry, and *wayang*.[32]

The *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* is not alone among literary works of this era in its emphasis on a Javanese-oriented Islam. Although within the microcosm of the *Book of One Thousand Questions*' history its shifting narrative represents a significant change within the larger sphere of Javanese writings, it can be viewed as one among several important works responding to outside pressure and changing circumstances. Such works cover a range of nuanced perspectives, ranging from those, such as the *Serat Dermagandhul*, which present Islam as foreign to Java, to those, such as the *Serat Wedhatama*, which emphasize Javanese spirituality as the paramount path, to our *Suluk*, which reaffirms an Islam deeply rooted in Javanese soil.[33]

The literary and religious shift in the Ibnu Salam story we have seen speaks not only to present academic attempts to highlight the importance of South and Southeast Asian Muslim societies for understanding Islam's many facets, but also to the ways in which the textual sources themselves produced in those regions were often reconfigured in order to emphasize the local forms of a global religion.

The textual recentring of Islam to Java evident in the Seh Ngabdulsalam story — itself an expansion of an already localized *Book of One Thousand Questions* — takes several forms. The move from according great authority to the ancient scriptures in the *Book of One Thousand Questions* to according it to commentaries in Arabic *kitab* and mystical *suluk* parallels the transition — spatial and temporal — from a depiction of conversion in seventh-century Arabia to a discussion of forms of conversion and change in contemporary Java. Abdullah Ibnu Salam's journey from Jewish disciple to Muslim *guru* leaves the outsider's perspective aside and centres on an internal dialogue defining the contours of what it meant to be Muslim and Javanese.

Notes

1. On the educational institutions, see Takya Shu'ayb 'Alim, *Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu* (Madras: Imamul 'Arus Trust, 1993), pp. 502 and 514. On intermarriage, see Susan Bayly, "Islam and State Power in Pre-Colonial South India", *India and Indonesia During the Ancien Regime*, edited by P.J. Marshall and R. van Niel (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1989). p. 145.
2. Raffles noted that native soldiers often served first in India, then Java. He mentioned the quarters of Javanese soldiers in Calcutta and the fact that such neighborhoods existed in several Indian cities. Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 202.
3. On references to Southeast Asia in early Sanskrit literature, see H.B. Sarkar, "A Geographical Introduction to Southeast Asia: The Indian Perspective", *BKI* 137 (1981): 293–323.
4. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 74 and 117.
5. See, for example, the famous tradition according to which the Prophet never told anyone but the convert Ibn Salam with certainty that they would inhabit paradise in the future: Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami-Us-Sahih*, translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1977), p. 1323.
6. The Tamil *Book of One Thousand Questions* was composed in 1572. The latest published edition is Cayitu 'Hassan' Muhammad, ed., *Ayira Macala: Islamiyat Tamil Ilakkiya Ulakin Mutar Kappiyam [One Thousand Questions: The First Narrative Poem of Tamil Muslim Literature]* (Madras: M.Itris Maraikkayar, 1984).
7. For an introduction to the history of the *Book of One Thousand Questions* in Tamil, Malay, and Javanese, see Ronit Ricci, "Translating Conversion in South and Southeast Asia: The Islamic '*Book of One Thousand Questions*' in Javanese, Tamil, and Malay" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2006), pp. 1–57.
8. The manuscript mentioned by Pijper is *Samud* (MS. LOr 4001), see Guillaume Frederic Pijper, *Het Boek Der Duizend Vragen* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1924), p. 67. The later manuscript is *Seh Ngabdulsalam* in *Suluk Warni-Warni* (MS. FSUI PW 128). See T.E. Behrend and Titik Pudjiastutu, eds., *Katalog Induk Naskah Naskah Nusantara: Fakultas Sastra Universitas Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia/Ecole Francaise D'Extreme Orient, 1997), p. 741.
9. The importance of the *suluk* genre is discussed in Nancy K. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 259–60.
10. This comparison is based on *Seh Samud* and *Suluk Ngabdulsalam*, the two textual

variants that appear, almost consecutively, in a 1901 anonymous *Piwulang* manuscript compilation from Surakarta MS. FSUI PW 56, listed in Behrend, ed., *Katalog Induk Naskah Naskah Nusantara: Fakultas Sastra Universitas Indonesia*, p. 703.

11. This partial list may give the reader a sense of the scope of the more traditional *Book of One Thousand Questions* in Javanese.
12. Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888*, Verhandelingen Van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde, vol. 50 ('S- Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966). p. 163.
13. Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888*, p. 149. The *tarekat* became the spearhead of religious-political unrest against colonial rule (Kartodirdjo, p. 163).
14. Karel A. Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek Tentang Islam Di Indonesia Abad Ke-19* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), pp. 178–79.
15. For example, in 1913 the *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* was published (by a Dutch press) for the first time, changing — as print does — the types of audience, reading practices, and circulation of the story in ways previously unimagined.
16. For example, in the 1901 *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* (MS. FSUI PW 56), Seh Ngabdulsalam is portrayed as a yogi, pundit, and *alim*, presenting him as combining skills and attributes from different traditions but, fundamentally, retaining the features of the disciple Ibnu Salam.
17. The discussion and examples below are based on Sastrawiryono, *Soeloek Sheh Ngabdoelsalam* (Surakarta: Albert Rusche and Co., 1913).
18. Sastrawiryono, ed., *Soeloek Sheh Ngabdoelsalam*, p. 1.
19. Whether the citation is accurate or not does not concern us here. The point is that the Javanese author is calling upon the authority of a religious compendium composed in Arabic.
20. The verse is written in the *dhandhanggula* meter. Sastrawiryono, ed., *Soeloek Sheh Ngabdoelsalam*, p. 14.
21. The dialogue element, or an attempt to transcend the two categories, is clearly evident in the figure of the disciple Raden Sabdasampurna, whose name means "perfected speech", and who is, accordingly, said to possess excellent skills in both Javanese and Arabic. This son is depicted as wise, handsome, and much beloved by Seh Ngabdulsalam, an expert in poetry and literature.
22. Sastrawiryono, ed., *Soeloek Sheh Ngabdoelsalam*, pp. 44–52.
23. For a general introduction to *gamelan* in Javanese culture see Henry Spiller, *Gamelan: The Traditional Sounds of Indonesia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004).
24. I thank Ben Arps for sharing his knowledge of *gamelan* with me and illuminating several of the terms appearing in this passage.
25 These are the four stages, or stations, on the sufi path.

26. The twenty attributes are divided into the categories of *napsiyah*, *salbiyah*, *magnani*, and *maknawiyat*.
27. The verse is written in the *sinom* meter:
Lamun sira amicara/ ngèlmu rasa ingkang luwih/ kang teka suluk wetunya/ tan nganggo kitab sathithik/ iku rupané becik/nora biyak waran gung/ marang ing wadenira/ pralambangé nora tebih/ pasthi eca déné nora biyak wrana//
Sastrawiryono, ed., *Soeloek Sheh Ngabdoelsalam*, p. 53. I leave the word "*rasa*" untranslated, as no single English equivalent is appropriate. *Rasa* has a range of meaning which encompasses taste, sensation, meaning, connotation, sense, experience, insight, mysticism. For a discussion of the complexity of this term, see Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java*, pp. 176n and 360–61.
28. In *suluk* there is often an expression of a special delight, or deliciousness, found in veiling, in keeping something secret — through analogy, allegory, or multiplicity of meaning — in order for it to be revealed, as it is near at hand already.
29. Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek Tentang Islam di Indonesia Abad Ke-19*, p. 157. Some of the *kitab* mentioned and cited in *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* (*Kitab Sitin, Kitab Usul* and *Kitab Sanusi*) are known to have been taught in nineteenth century *pesantren*, further validating the claim that the *Suluk* is engaged in a contemporary debate over Muslim affiliations. For a study of *pesantren* and their curriculums, see Martin Van Bruinessen, "Pesantren and Kitab Kuning: Maintenance and Continuation of a Tradition of Religious Learning", *Texts from the Islands. Oral and Written Traditions of Indonesia and the Malay World*, edited by Wolfgang Marschall (Berne: University of Berne, 1994).
30. Ricklefs notes the prevalence at the time of an atmosphere of questioning what it meant to be a Muslim. This may have contributed to the text — based on a question and answer debate — being widely circulated and, in a way, itself being converted into something new in its *Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam* incarnation. On the questioning atmosphere, see M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization in Java", *Conversion to Islam*, edited by Nehemia Levtzion (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1979), pp. 115–17.
31. On the *guru tarekat* as well as other teacher-types in nineteenth-century Java, see Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek Tentang Islam di Indonesia Abad Ke-19*, pp. 152–53.
32. On the latter connection, see Laurie Sears, *Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 119.
33. On the former, see G.W.J. Drewes, "The Struggle between Javanism and Islam as Illustrated in the Serat Dermagandul", *BKI* 122, no. 3 (1966). For an introduction to, and translation into English of, the *Serat Wedhatama*, see Stuart Robson, *The Wedhatama: An English Translation* (Leiden: KITLV, 1990).

5

WAYANG PARSI, BANGSAWAN AND PRINTING
Commercial Cultural Exchange between South Asia and the Malay World[1]

Jan van der Putten

The 1870s is an attractive vantage point from which to start a discussion about an intensification in the exchange of "modern" cultural expressions between South Asia and the Malay world. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had brought a host of new people and a variety of new products to the East, and the rapid development of steam navigation facilitated new patterns of their circulation across the Indian Ocean. First landfall in Asia would often be Bombay, which by then was part of a network of profitable steam shipping lines transporting goods and people further east. The unprecedented global economic expansion of that period had far reaching effects on South and Southeast Asia, where colonialism and entrepreneurism shaped the creation of new spaces for cultural production and exchange. An increasingly vast land area was cleared from forests to make way for plantations that needed an enormous influx of labourers to work them, while the products were shipped from port towns that grew into urban centres populated by an amalgam of immigrants seeking new fortunes. It was in these urban centres that small enterprises were established to tap into the dynamics of this new economy. The situation thus gave rise to the circulation of a wide range of new material and cultural

products, ranging from bicycles and Swiss-made watches, to newspapers, shows by Indian snake charmers, and British professors giving public lectures about new inventions such as the telephone and gramophone.

The following advertisement from the late 1880s, published in a Malay newspaper nicely captures the opportunities that opened up for people in rapidly expanding towns such as Singapore:

Advertisement

Whoever wants to contract at cheap rates the Betawi band players who played with the Wayang Parsi theatre group the Imperial Theatre of Deccan Hyderabad Company at tauke Lee Cheng Tee's stage can come and talk to me at 44 Sultan Road opposite the mosque in Kampung Gelam.

Haji Agus bin Masagus Abdulkarim Palembang, 14.10.89[2]

In many ways this advertisement epitomizes the multicultural and commercial character of popular art forms in the Malay world and the contacts it had with the South Asian subcontinent at the end of the nineteenth century. A South Asian Parsi theatrical group had toured the Netherlands East Indies for some time and had innovated its performances by engaging an instrumental band in Batavia (Betawi, present-day Jakarta). The company performed in Hindustani and most appealing for the audience, the majority of whom did not understand that language, were the actions, songs, and music, as well as the actresses who apparently drove a number of males in the audience to infatuation.[3] Their tour around Java inspired a Chinese businessman and a Eurasian artist in the creation of a Netherlands Indies' localized form of Parsi theatre, known as Komedie Stamboel.[4] However, after a few successful months in Singapore, the Parsi group drew heavy losses because of the language barrier and it packed up for a voyage to Hong Kong. The owner of the stage where the troupe had performed in Singapore was a Chinese entrepreneur who had previously ventured into the popular theatre business by buying the properties of the bankrupt Indramawan theatre group, which he also employed by paying a share of the profits.[5] The band was left behind when the troupe left for Hong Kong, and apparently, a certain Haji Agus from Palembang had set himself up as the agent for the band. Most significant here is the address he gives in the advertisement, which is in the area around the Sultan Mosque where indigenous printers had concentrated their shops at that time. Haji Agus' advertisement ran in six consecutive issues of the newspaper entitled *Jawi Peranakan* in late 1889. This first, and relatively long-lived, Malay newspaper was published by a group of Indian Muslim entrepreneurs, and at that time,

was under the editorship of a Javanese resident of Singapore named Haji Muhammad Siraj. *Jawi Peranakan* provided a channel for the organizers of commercial art forms to advertise their products, as well as for newly emerging journalists to review them, creating a space in which readers could come to feel themselves as part of an exciting environment in which the people were connected to each other by a common language, shared conversations, and new shared experiences of an emerging modern lifestyle.

In this chapter, I will discuss cultural developments that took place in urban centres of the Malay world during the last quarter of the nineteenth century that were inspired by new influences coming from South Asia at that time. The urban communities in port cities such as Singapore and Penang, where a constant flow of diverse peoples was passing through, created a situation in which the population was forced to negotiate both individual and communal identities constantly. In these urban centres there was vibrant experimentation with art forms in conversation with the diverse influences then being brought by visitors and new settlers. In the highly competitive and monetized world of port cities, most of these art forms were developed with commercial objectives. Nevertheless, art businesses were almost never very profitable ventures in the Malay world of the nineteenth century, and so the resilience of many cultural entrepreneurs and their enterprises also need to be explained with reference to other factors, including patronage, ideology, and a healthy dose of idealism.

A few communities were especially instrumental in the development of popular art forms in this context, including the Parsis from South Asia, Eurasians, and acculturated Indian and Arab Muslims, as well as Chinese Peranakans. These "intermediary communities", consisting of people who have been characterized as "creative foreigners"[6] seemed to have been most receptive to new influences from abroad, and at the same time, most active in the localization of these art forms. Their activities also extended into other fields of the cultural world, such as printing and journalism, and it is through these media that new art forms were made known across the region and became integrated into diverse local traditions. This chapter will focus on a localized form of Parsi theatre most frequently referred to as Bangsawan theatre, and the impact that this performance art, originally imported from South Asia, had on the modern cultural history of the Malay world.

CREATIVE FOREIGNERS

Intermediary minority groups operate on the borderlines of communities whence they have access to more than one group, but do not belong fully to

any one of them. They are thus forced to negotiate their own positions and relationships constantly. In colonial systems some of these groups became the intermediaries between colonial officials, local elites, and the broader population. In the process, some of them managed to fare well in the era of the domination of trade by the British and Dutch East India Companies, and some, even to gain considerable cultural capital through the organization of art forms. In other cases, however, some became increasingly marginalized as majority groups asserted their rights towards the foreign masters, and more distinct boundaries between ethnic groups were emphasized in communitarian politics. The Eurasians and Chinese Peranakan groups in the Netherlands East Indies are prime examples of this trend; at one time they had established themselves as landowners and traders, but over the course of the nineteenth century, their public roles became less prominent. Nevertheless the Eurasians became increasingly involved in the colonial administration and the budding publishing industry, in which Chinese Peranakan also played a crucial role.[7]

The Parsis were an age-old migrant group in western India by the time the British arrived to set up their headquarters in Bombay in the late seventeenth century. In the early nineteenth century they formed a large minority group in that city, partly because the British had exerted themselves in attracting traders, moneylenders, shipbuilders, and craftsmen from the surrounding areas in order to make the trading post prosperous. Filling in the gaps created by the lack of English settlers there at the time, the Parsis came to take on many prominent roles in colonial society. As a result they were generally quite supportive of the East India Company (EIC), and many prominent members of the community became considerably Anglicized. This elite took advantage of their rapport with the EIC by expanding their business interests and accumulating considerable wealth. In the course of the nineteenth century however, their dominance in the cotton and opium trade diminished and many sought employment with the British colonial government or ventured in other fields. The Parsis had invested in the education of their children by sending them to schools set up under a scheme to expand education for the indigenous population, and some also sending their children to England for advanced studies later. Even those who remained in India, however, had access to elite schools such as Elphinstone College in Bombay where, in addition to studying modern science and English literature, students formed cultural associations and staged English plays.[8]

Through these means Parsis came into contact with the western tradition of stage performance and production which provided an impetus to the development of the eclectic form known as Parsi theatre. They started in the late 1850s, producing Shakespeare in Gujerati. By the 1870s, recently-formed

professional groups partly shifted to Urdu as the major language for the plays, which enabled them to tap into a larger repertoire of Persian-Muslim stories and themes and to reach beyond the confines of Gujerati-speaking audiences. These theatrical groups — carrying grandiloquent names such as the Victoria Theatrical Company and the Elphinstone Company, reflecting Parsis' attachment to English royalty and institutions — applied new stage technologies and props directly imported from England and went on tours, first in South Asia, and thence to Burma, the Malay Peninsula, and beyond.[9] (See Colour Plate 7.)

The first place these groups got a foothold in the Malay world was Penang, an island off the northwest coast of the Peninsula, which the sultan of Kedah had ceded to the EIC in 1786. The EIC developed it into an entrepôt to compete with the Dutch in Melaka, by encouraging migrant groups of merchants and craftsmen to come to the island. Until the 1850s, groups of Indian Muslims from the surrounding areas and others coming directly from South Asia formed the most dominant community on the island before being superseded by Chinese immigrants. The majority of these migrants were male who married Malay women thereby creating a community of mixed ancestry commonly referred to as "Jawi Peranakan". Migration from the South Asian subcontinent into the Malay world has a history that probably dates back to the beginning of the Christian era. But EIC involvement in the migration patterns from South Asia made an indelible and recent impact that is still quite obvious in present-day Malaysia and Singapore.

Similar to the Parsis in Gujerat, the Jawi Peranakan in Penang too were primarily engaged in trade, and the more prominent members of the community associated with the British and invested heavily in the education of their children. This enabled a relatively large proportion of the community to venture into employment with the British, either as clerks, tax collectors, or in the education system itself as teachers. These fields of interest became increasingly important in the second half of the nineteenth century when Chinese migrants invested large sums of money into enterprises in Penang, providing stiff competition for Jawi Peranakan businesses and eventually pushing them to the margin.[10] The special attention many Jawi Peranakan paid to education in combination with their Islamic upbringing and studies enabled them to become high-profile members of the Muslim Malay communities of Penang and other urban areas, such as Singapore, Melaka, and Kuala Lumpur. At the same time many Jawi Peranakan were multilingual and maintained contacts with people in the land of origin of their forebears.

It does not come as a big surprise then that Parsi theatrical companies on tour through Southeast Asia met with great success in the settlements

through its combined appeal for both a relatively large and established Jawi Peranakan community, and more recent migrant groups from South Asia, such as Tamil indentured labourers. Prominent members of the Jawi Peranakan community also invited groups from South Asia. The arrival of these troupes and the effect they had on the development of popular theatrical forms have been studied elsewhere.[11] From these studies it becomes clear that the Parsi theatre partly triggered and tapped into "a hybrid popular theatre movement, a network encompassing much of South and Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries".[12] Localized theatrical troupes were formed as nodes in that network, where South Asian, Chinese, and Javanese influences converged into new forms such as Komedie Stamboel, Mendu, Dul Muluk, and Bangsawan. The last of these, which was most popular in the Malay Peninsula, seems to be the most closely related to the Parsi theatre, which triggered the foundation of "imitation Parsi theatre groups" (*tiruan wayang Parsi*) in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

One example of the exploits of such a commercial *tiruan wayang Parsi* enterprise may suffice to illustrate the vibrancy of the new cultural entrepreneurship. It is reported that in the mid-1880s, Mamat Pushi, a Parsi businessman in Penang, formed the first local Wayang Parsi troupe, which he named Pushi Indera Bangsawan of Penang, also known as The Royal Malay Opera/Komidi Melayu, and most grandiloquently, The Empress Victoria Jawi Peranakan Theatrical Company, Penang. From the very start this group was a big hit, and stimulated the formation of two other groups around the same time: Sri Indramawan, also known as The Prince of Wales Theatrical Company, and Sri Mudawan.[13] By all accounts Mamat Pushi seems to have been a tycoon actively involved in the business of new cultural products in nineteenth-century Southeast Asia, in which he invested large amounts of money and apparently made considerable returns. In 1887 his troupes met with great success in Singapore, where Pushi owned the stage in Jalan Besar. One Haji Tambi was appointed as special local agent for the Sri Indramawan troupe. However, after problems with the local authorities in Deli, North Sumatra, in September 1888, and adverse public reactions to their performances in Singapore in mid-1889, the Sri Indramawan troupe was declared bankrupt and its properties auctioned (as illustrated in the advertisement quoted at the beginning of this chapter). The Indra Bangsawan troupe, however, went on and prolonged their successes by constantly innovating its performance techniques, procuring a set of new costumes from India, and adding beautiful actresses to the cast who were also famed for their singing. In late November 1894 this troupe booked Pushi's theatre at Jalan Besar for a longer period and performed seven plays in a row, before leaving for Palembang in January the

following year. There the troupe was a smash hit with the local population, who — it was reported — were very sad to see the actors go.[14]

The performances of the Indra Bangsawan from late November 1894 were given prominent exposure through advertisements in the local press. The commercial Parsi groups and their local counterparts made use of advertisements and reports about the performances and groups in newly established newspapers, as well as broadsheets produced by small print shops.[15] It was at this intersection of popular theatrical forms, the emerging print industry, and a burgeoning reformist Islam in the region that we encounter a pivotal role for the "creative foreigners" or "intermediary communities", such as Parsis in Gujerat, Jawi Peranakan in Malaya, and Eurasians and Peranakan Chinese in the Netherlands East Indies.

NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLISHING

In a society increasingly inundated by a sense of Western time measurements and technologies linked to "modernity", information in the port cities of the Malay world became a commodity that could be bought and sold. People needed to know when the next boat to China was bound to depart so they could prepare the merchandise, whether relatives were among the passengers on the mail boat from Singapore, what new goods the English trader had to offer, etc. Newspapers provided a new means for structuring such information and delivering it to a public audience. Newspapers had been introduced to the Malay world by the Dutch in the mid-eighteenth century, but it was only a century later that their numbers increased, due to changes in colonial legislation that allowed for publishing companies to develop into profitable enterprises. Publishers faced a number of different problems to make a profit in these early days, such as the high investment costs for printing presses, low literacy rates of the population, small and dispersed communities of readers making distribution difficult and expensive, and problems with the recovery of claims to defaulting subscribers. With the expansion of transportation and infrastructure in the nineteenth century, the situation improved and Malay newspapers began to emerge as a significant cultural form in the port cities in the Netherlands East Indies, such as Semarang, Surabaya, Batavia, and Padang. These periodicals, mostly edited by Eurasians, carried local and foreign news items, and as they were predominantly catering to traders and civil servants, gave prominence to advertisements and official notices from the colonial government.[16]

In the period between 1876 and 1905, members of the Jawi Peranakan communities were instrumental in the publication of at least ten periodicals

in Singapore and Penang, of which the *Jawi Peranakan* (1876–95; henceforth *JP*) and *Sekola Melayu* (1888–90; henceforth *SM*) are the best known and long-lived.[17] In 1876 a group of Jawi Peranakan teachers and professional writers (*munsyi*) accumulated some capital to start a publishing company that published the first Malay-language newspaper in Singapore. They seem to have started out with lithographic presses, in accordance with the other small Muslim publishing companies in South and Southeast Asia, but soon shifted to typographic printing with presses ordered from England in 1877.[18] The company was established by Munsyi Muhammad Said bin Dada Muhyiddin, who was born in Penang to Tamil-Jawi Peranakan parents, studied with the secretary of the sultan of Kedah, and had travelled broadly throughout the region. In Singapore he became trustee of two mosques, taught at the prestigious Raffles Institution, and set up the publishing and printing company, Matba' Saidi, which also had the Jawi Peranakan Company as an imprint.[19] He was a well-respected member of the Singapore Muslim community and served as chief editor of *JP* until his death in June 1888.

Muhammad Said's death seems to have created some confusion and possible conflict as to who should succeed him as chief editor and what was to become of the publishing company.[20] In 1889 Haji Muhammad Siraj bin Haji Muhammad Saleh struck a deal with the *JP* management and became editor between 1889 and 1891. At the same time he was also apparently a significant sponsor of the paper, judging from the advertisement pages with which *JP* started each issue. During his stint as editor, these were presented mostly in the form of lists of books available at his shop, and advertisements for new books that rolled off his presses.[21] In the meantime Munsyi Syeikh Muhammad Ali bin Ghulam Hussain al-Hindi, who had earlier served as editor of *JP*, had launched his own newspaper, *SM*, on 1 August 1888, which would survive until 1890. In the editorial of the first issue, he asked for support so that the newspaper could continue to advance the interests of the Malay community.[22] Typically, Muhammad Ali identifies himself with the Malays in his writing by using *kita Melayu* ("us/we Malays"), something Roff also noticed for the writing in *JP*.[23] This identification with the Malays becomes more telling when we realize that the few presses owned by members of the Jawi Peranakan community in Singapore also published early Tamil newspapers and books. For example, around the same time Muhammad Said started the Jawi Peranakan Company, the presses were also used to print the Tamil periodical *Tangai Nesan*.[24]

Other Tamil periodicals were published by the Denodaya Press, which also used the imprint Denothaya Venthira Press, owned by Makhdum Sahib bin Ghulam Mukhyuddin Sahib. This member of the Singapore Jawi Peranakan

community had started his print shop on the south bank of the Singapore River, near the Indian mosque in South Bridge Road, but later moved into the Kampung Glam area where most of the other printers were located. He appears to have published an early Tamil newspaper called *Singai Virthamani* in 1875, and in the late 1880s, was behind the publication of the Tamil weekly *Singai Nesan*.[25] His presses also produced other works, such as an Italian-Malay dictionary and phrase book dedicated to Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor, a broadsheet for a visiting Parsi theatrical company, and *Wanhua Lu*, a Malay translation of a Chinese story.[26] Makhdum Sahib is also mentioned as the author of a literary work that reflects on the social life of Tamils in Singapore at the end of the nineteenth century. The story was published in instalments in the *Singai Nesan* and he apparently planned to publish it as a book, but that never materialized.[27]

Members of the Jawi Peranakan community in Singapore and Penang did not dominate the budding printing industry. They owned a few presses that produced high-profile early newspapers and a limited number of books. The fact that they published works in Malay and Tamil signifies their position on the boundaries of groups in the diaspora, which was part of their strength as they could identify themselves with Malay *as well as* Tamil elements of the population. Printing enabled them to write themselves out of the margins of the receiving society into the core of emerging "national histories". It also secured the ties with the "home country", created a sense of belonging in the diaspora, and blurred boundaries between migrant groups.[28]

The printing industry in Singapore, however, came to be dominated by a different migrant group. First- and second-generation immigrants hailing from the north coast of Java owned most of the print shops that occupied the shop houses around the mosque in Kampung Glam.[29] The core of this group may have been pilgrims who, on their way to or from Mecca, had settled in Singapore, where they tried to make a living through trade and publishing Islamic tracts and other books. Haji Muhammad Siraj was one such second-generation settler whose father had come from Rembang on the north coast of Java and had established a small print shop in Singapore. The son expanded his father's business and printed many popular Malay stories, thereby establishing himself as a retailer of books with a network of agents throughout the Peninsula and beyond. In Penang he cooperated with a major publisher and bookseller, Haji Putih bin Syaikh Abu Basyir (another member of the Jawi Peranakan network), and in Batavia Muhammad Siraj engaged the leading bookseller and newspaper-publishing house, Albrecht and Rusche, as his agent.[30] He also worked out arrangements with the Jawi

Peranakan Company that enabled him to change *JP*'s classified pages into a virtual bookseller's catalogue during his time as editor.

It is clear that Singapore and Penang served as major nodes in networks of printers, publishers, writers, and distributors of the printed word from insular Southeast Asia and the South Asian subcontinent. These publishing networks were intertwined with those linking major figures involved in the commercial theatre movement. It is, therefore, no surprise that the newspapers carried much information about the theatre shows and were used to advertise upcoming performances and explain their stories. Conversely, the publishing companies also used the theatrical shows to popularize and sell their stories, as will be discussed in the next section.

BOOKS FROM THEATRE PLAYS

It seems logical that the touring Parsi theatre companies were initially welcomed by Jawi Peranakan and other groups with a South Asian background, such as Sepoys, and indentured labourers and convicts, who had settled temporarily or permanently in the expanding urban centres of the Malay world. Being fully acculturated and integrated in these local contexts, the Jawi Peranakan used their extensive networks and accumulated capital to enable theatre troupes to tour Southeast Asia and set up their own companies to perform plays in Malay. The spectacular shows in which the companies mainly performed stories in a Middle Eastern, Islamic setting, were well received by the population of the urban centres as they were well acquainted with stories about supernatural occurrences, the intermediation of flying *peri* ("fairies"), the activities of evil and kind *jinn*, and the quest for or by beautiful princesses in celestial palaces who were abducted by evil suitors or left in the forest by destitute parents. These types of romances have a long history in the Malay world where Javanese Rama and Panji stories were used as a repertoire for *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) performances, and story tellers roamed around telling their tales and singing their ballads of Malay heroes, Muslim mendicants and Chinese princesses. In literary centres such as Palembang and Riau during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ballads (*syair*) had taken prevalence over the rhythmic prose stories of the *hikayat*. In Riau in particular, *syair* were written to propagate and teach a distinctly Islamic worldview in a Middle Eastern setting.[31]

Lithographic printing presses had arrived and were experimented with in Palembang, Surabaya, and Riau in the 1850s, and in Singapore a decade later, producing high-quality Islamic tracts that were still very close in style

and appearance to the manuscript tradition. During the next few decades, a burgeoning printing industry developed in Kampung Glam, an area around the palace of the sultan of Singapore where a variety of different ethnic groups sharing Islam as common denominator converged on the south bank of Rochor River, which formed its economic lifeline. It was also on the fringes of this area that the first stages were erected for performances by Wayang Parsi troupes, such as Mamat Pushi's stage in Jalan Besar, and the stage erected in Queen Street (former Kampung Boyan), which was reportedly "secured with stones" (*diikat dengan batu*).[32] In nearby Kampung Bali one of the first *bangsawan* groups was formed by the Javanese community as a result of their success with an earlier show staged as part of a *bulan Safar* celebration.[33]

In South Asia, a tradition of writing down play scripts was well established by the nineteenth century. Hansen notes over 400 librettos for the ongoing *Nautanki* and *Svang* traditions in the northern part of the subcontinent from the 1860s onwards. Most of the early texts were lithographed and served as *aide-mémoire* for the players to remember their text and songs. Together with the information found in the advertisement on the back cover, prefaces by the editors, and colophons by the poets, these texts form a massive repository to trace the evolution of these theatrical traditions. Another characteristic of these lithographed librettos is the densely ornamented covers which often contain illustrations of prominent scenes in the story. Other illustrations were included within the text itself.[34] A similar tradition of publishing theatre texts was in place for the popular and highly competitive Parsi theatre groups that also recruited professional writers for plays in Urdu.[35]

There may be little doubt that the most popular play performed throughout the subcontinent was *Indar Sabha*, a text written in Lucknow in 1853, which would set off dramatic changes in the theatre tradition of South Asia and beyond. By the 1860s the play was performed by Parsi groups who soon changed it into an opera and experimented in it with new stage techniques to show the flying *peri* and other special effects. The play was also a huge hit for the printing industry: from the 1870s alone, forty-one printed editions are preserved in the British Library. Even in Europe a German scholarly translation of the play in Urdu inspired Paul Lincke to compose the operetta *Im Reiche des Indra* in 1892. The translation was published with a facsimile edition of the original, which was embellished with illustrations of some important scenes. These drawings may have been inspired by the theatre performances and are indicative of a local style of representation.[36]

In the Malay world there was no well-established tradition of writing down the texts of performances.[37] There were, however, popular romances whose stories could easily serve as the material for enactment and several of

these romances contain distinct theatrical elements.[38] Nevertheless the South Asian tradition of publishing theatre texts did *not* spawn a similarly rich genre in the Malay world, although Parsi theatre groups must have brought examples of such texts with them to be able to perform a range of plays and adjust the repertoire to public demand. That these texts indeed reached and were distributed in the region is clear from a small number of translations that were made of popular theatre texts. In an unpublished paper, Braginsky and Suvorova discuss five of these adaptations and compare two in detail with Urdu prototypes: *Mazhab-i 'Ishq* for the *Hikayat Gul Bakawali* and *Indar Sabha* for the *Syair Indra Sebaha*. They come to the conclusion that the basic narrative structures were left unchanged, but that the translators had expanded the stories to indigenize the material and adapt them to the expectations of a Malay audience. Braginsky and Suvorova show, for instance, that compared with the Urdu original, the author of the Malay *Syair Indra Sebaha* inserted three new sections while condensing others, demonstrating some of the ways in which the adaptation of foreign materials into Malay through the medium of popular theatre actually worked.[39]

For the remainder of this chapter I will look more into the sociology of these adaptations to show how they fitted in with other cultural products of the translators and printers in nineteenth-century South and Southeast Asia. Braginsky and Suvorova identified five texts that definitely belonged to this body of translated Urdu texts connected to the theatre: *Hikayat Gul Bakawali* (1880, 1892?, 1893, 1905), *Syair Indra Sebaha* (1889, 1891, 1896, 1901), *Syair Laili Majnun* (1888), *Hikayat Sultan Bustamam* (1874, 1895, 1900, 1914), and the *Hikayat Ganja Mara* (1886, 1897). They also identify three other titles that may also owe their popularity to the theatre: *Hikayat Alauddin*, *Hikayat Ali Baba,* and *Hikayat Kamar al-Zaman*, and there may be more texts that belong to this group. However due to constraints of space here, I will focus on only a few of those identified by Braginsky and Suvorova.

The first is *Hikayat Gul Bakawali*, a text very popular in the theatre. In its Malay adaptations we find a few names that we encountered before. The text was translated or adapted by Muhammad Ali al-Hindi, the man who was most probably a member of the Jawi Peranakan Company, but set up his own newspaper in August 1888. Apparently in the late 1870s he had adapted an Urdu version of the text and sold the rights to another member of the Jawi Peranakan community in Singapore, Makhdum Sahib, the man behind some of the early Tamil newspapers published there. There is no information as to how much Makhdum Sahib paid for the translation, but he was most adamant about keeping the rights he had bought, for in addition to the normal announcement about its registration with the government,

he emphasized that people who violate his rights would be prosecuted. He also offered a reward to anyone who would report violators and in the *syair* that concludes the book he reaffirmed his rights in perpetuity.[40] However, in 1922 Makhdum Sahib sold the rights, and the *Hikayat Gul Bakawali* ran for another two reprints with a certain Haji Muhammad Amin as the publisher.[41] The text itself was interspersed with poems in *syair, pantun, gurindam*, and *ruba'i* Malay verse forms, which may have been the reason behind Za'ba's apparent enthusiasm for this text.[42]

The *Indar Sabha* was also a great hit with the theatre performances in the Malay world, which is indicated in the reviews and advertisements of the plays, and in the printing industry, as it experienced three reprints in a period of twelve years. Demand and interest in the first edition of the book were being stimulated by a publicity campaign conducted by its publisher Muhammad Siraj, who posted the following advertisement for five months in every issue of *JP* from December 1888 onward:

> *Syair Indra Sebaha*
>
> The *Syair Indra Sebaha* is a beautiful story that is praised in all the *Wayang Parsi* shows and famous all over the world with every nation. The *syair* has been translated from Hindustani into Malay by Muhammad Hasan bin Nasruddin and at the moment it is being lithographed in beautiful script and clear printing, and accompanied with illustrations following the plot [*menurut hal*]. The format of the *syair* is as any other printed *syair*, but the volume is over 100 pages. The price will be 50 cents a copy. If you want this *syair*, send your name and address to me, Haji Muhammad Siraj bin Haji Muhammad Saleh, printer. 43 Jalan Sultan Road Singapura, and to Haji Putih bin Syeikh Umar al-Khalidi, 52 Jalan Acheen Street in Penang. When we have finished the printing we can send it to those who want it.

The advertisement was signed by Muhammad Siraj and is interesting for several reasons. We see a prolonged publicity campaign preceding the publication of the first edition of the translation. After five months of waiting, finally, on 13 May 1889, the announcement was published that the book was printed and available for purchase with cash in Singapore, Penang, and Batavia. If people lived elsewhere, mail orders could be placed and the price would be raised 10 cents for postage. The same strategy was also employed to advertise the other examples of adaptations, such as *Syair Laili Majnun* advertised in *SM*, and *Hikayat Alaudddin* in *JP*. The latter was translated from the (English) Arabian Nights by the Eurasian translator A.F. von Dewall and reproduced typographically, in contrast to the others that were lithographed.[43]

These stories were being advertised as having reached their popularity and fame through their performances in the Parsi theatre. Finally, the ads stated, the story would be available in printed form for a Malay audience. Here we find a strong indication of how these new cultural forms of popular expression in the late nineteenth century cross-fertilized each other. The printers used the popularity of the stories to boost sales, while the first impetus to translate the stories was also from the performance by itinerant theatre groups. The announcements are also interesting in the way they gauge the market for the feasibility of the publications: interested buyers may want to sign up to obtain a copy of these undoubtedly popular books before the print run is sold out, at least, that is the suggestion the publishers made. In case there were too few people who signed up, the publisher could always abandon the plan to publish with only the costs of the campaign as his losses.

The stories were adorned with illustrations, a novelty in Malay publications of that time.[44] Indian lithographs, on the other hand, were usually adorned with lavishly decorated front covers, which also contained illustrations of important scenes from the text, such as in the case of the *Indar Sabha*. Also in the text itself, penned drawings were inserted that represented key scenes of the play.[45] The printed editions of Malay adaptations of the story are also embellished with drawings that quite clearly suggest the influence of a South Asian edition that served as a model for these illustrations. Annabel Gallop has noted a decrease in quality of the illustrations in the fourth edition of the *Syair Indra Sebaha* (1901), which may have been caused by its status of bestseller and, therefore, no special attention was needed to safeguard the quality of the drawings.[46] However, compared with the earlier pictures, an element of perspective becomes visible and it also seems as if they are modelled on images from live performances in the theatre rather than on a South Asian tradition of schematized representations. This impression is enhanced by one of the illustrations printed on the back cover of the fourth edition. In it a fairy blowing a horn and holding a banner in her right hand with "*Indra Sebaha*" written on it in Latin characters seems to be flying off the stage, represented by a landscape in the bottom left corner, a sun or moon behind clouds in the top left corner, and a curtain on the right-hand side of the picture. It might just represent a spectacular conclusion to one of the many performances; it is at least suggestive of this.[47]

The images found in printed editions of the *Syair Laili Majnun* suggest more localized and Western stylistic influences. First there are the two opening pages of the *syair*, in which the text is inserted in square frames positioned in serrated hexagons and decorated with floral patterns reminiscent of the lithographic techniques developed in the Malay publications of Reverend

Keasberry.[48] The lithographed *syair* is also embellished with a total of sixteen interleaved illustrations that were made by a certain R.A. Oliveiro, possibly a member of the Eurasian community in Singapore. These illustrations representing certain key scenes in the story, seem to stem from a Western style of representation, which may have been inspired by the representation of the story on the stage in local performances. The palace scenes in particular seem to be stills taken at the highlight points of the performance, such as the moment Laili's father catches his daughter together with Majnun inside the palace (see Colour Plate 10). Typically, the father seems to be wearing sunglasses, which would suggest a parody of the original story, but this is not supported in the text of the *syair* itself. The pictures that may have served the illiterate part of the population with a means to envision the story apparently, were not successful in securing reprints of the book. Only one edition is known from the collections, which may have been caused by the financial difficulties that the publisher, Muhammad Ali al-Hindi, was experiencing at the time.[49] Although his name is mentioned as translator and contributor in a few subsequent publications, Muhammad Ali's role in the Singapore printing industry appears to have been coming to an end by that point. The last work in which his name is mentioned, *Pansjurah*, a religious work printed in Bombay, is perhaps also indicative of the fading star of Singapore's printing industry in the last decade of the nineteenth century as high-quality and cheap lithographs from Bombay, Mecca, Cairo, and Istanbul were invading the markets in Southeast Asia, and with which local printers could not compete.[50]

A certain premonition or foresight may have prompted Muhammad Siraj to order a Netherlands Indies version of the *Aladdin* story and have that printed on the letterpress of the Jawi Peranakan Company in 1890.[51] Objections initially raised against typographically reproduced books had turned into appreciation for the clear printing and the modern appearance of the books. Stories from the *Arabian Nights* had been well represented in the repertoire of the commercial theatrical movement.[52] Moreover, Muhammad Siraj ran the by now familiar advance publicity campaign for four months in *JP*, so there seemed to be no obstacle to making this story a profitable venture. As an extra attraction, this edition included six spectacular interleaved illustrations in what appears to have been a new style at that time. In these illustrations we can see the hand of a very accomplished artist who depicted Aladdin's exploits in China, where the story is actually set in the original Arabic *1,001 Nights*. However, not only does the setting seem clearly East Asian, but also the style itself seems to be of Chinese or Japanese inspiration (see Colour Plates 11 and 12).

Despite — or perhaps because of — this innovation, Muhammad Siraj's edition of *Aladdin* was not a commercial success, judged by the fact that there are no known reprints of the edition. The reasons for this remain unclear. Was it perhaps cheaper and more satisfying simply to attend the theatre to see the "real thing" in performance than to make do with a few pictures? Was this perhaps not a book that could captivate the imagination of the literates who had learned the art of reading, and perhaps in the process, acquired a distinct taste that this edition did not engage? We can only speculate as to why the book was not a big hit on the market, but judging by the high technical quality of the illustrations, it must have added to the lustre of urban culture which spurred authors to write and adapt other stories from the Middle East in this hybrid South and Southeast Asian form, such as Raja Haji Abdullah in Penyengat in the first two decades of the twentieth century.[53]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems clear that the commercial theatrical movement in Southeast Asia in the closing decades of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries was fostered by networks established by minority migrant groups, as well as by cross-fertilization with other cultural products, such as a growing body of printed popular stories and newspapers. Members of the Jawi Peranakan community in the Malay Peninsula were especially instrumental in adapting stories from the Perso-Urdu tradition that came to Southeast Asia through theatre performances and lithographed books. These stories were issued by a few Jawi Peranakan publishers, who advertised their products in the newspapers they had established. The newly adapted stories blended well with the other stories churned out by the printing presses, which were predominantly owned by Javanese migrants. The great majority of these stories propagated a Muslim worldview that was set in an Islamic fantasy world populated by fairies, genies, heroes, and princesses. This trend must not only have upset conservative and reformist *ulama*, who grew increasingly critical of romantic *syair* and fantastical adventure *hikayat* in the modern period, but also by more sober-minded British and Dutch colonial educationalists. The latter severely criticized the popular literature and theatre productions as being detrimental to the modernization they had envisaged for the Malay population. They also countered the movement by establishing institutions that published "good-quality" material that would educate the Malays in the "right" mode. However it would take another few decades before these measures would be effective, while popular theatre, literature, and later films nevertheless came to ensure that elements from these late nineteenth-

century productions could later become established tropes in certain forms of modern Malay culture.

This Malay tradition was formed during a very long period of cultural exchange with other traditions that were absorbed into local contexts. As is well known, South Asia played a prominent role as source for a variety of cultural forms that were adopted and transformed in the Malay world. From the last few decades of the nineteenth century onwards, modern transport facilities enabled an intensification of contacts between communities along the Indian Ocean littoral, while high colonialism resulted in the displacement of an increasing number of people between South and Southeast Asia. Networks of itinerant merchants and maritime traders had always straddled the Indian Ocean, but from the late nineteenth century, the ties were further developed through the technology and culture of print, as well as by touring commercial theatre troupes. Jawi Peranakan and other immigrant groups occupied a pivotal niche in the formation of Malay culture and identity through these transregional networks of printers and players.

Notes

1. I am indebted to a number of people for the help I received writing this chapter. I thank Kathryn Hansen for all the material she kindly provided, Vladimir Braginsky for unreservedly sending me an unpublished paper, Michael Laffan for sending me other unpublished materials, and Torsten Tschacher for all the information he gave me. It should go without saying that any errors are my own responsibility.
2. *Jawi Peranakan*, 14 October 1889.
3. Cantius Leo Camoens, "The Wayang Parsi, Tiruan Wayang Parsi, Komidi Melayu and the bangsawan, 1887–1895", *Malaysia in History* 25 (1982): 8.
4. See Matthew Isaac Cohen, "On the Origin of the Komedie Stamboel. Popular Culture, Colonial Society, and the Parsi Theatre Movement", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 157, no. 2 (2001): 313–57, and *The Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia, 1819–1903* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2006).
5. Camoens, "The Wayang Parsi", pp. 7–8.
6. Ulbe Bosma and Gijsbert Oonk, "Bombay Batavia: Parsi and Eurasian Variations on the Middlemen Theme", in *Mediators between State and Society*, edited by Nico Randeraad (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), pp. 17–18.
7. Bosma and Oonk, "Bombay Batavia", pp. 26–27; and Ahmat B. Adam, *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness (1855–1913)* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Programa Cornell University, 1995), pp. 38–78.
8. Bosma and Oonk, "Bombay Batavia".
9. See Kathryn Hansen, "Language, Community, and the Theatrical Public. Linguistic Pluralism and Change in the Nineteenth-century Parsi Theatre",

in *India's Literary History. Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), pp. 60–86.

10. See Helen Fujimoto, *The South Indian Muslim Community and the Evolution of the Jawi Peranakan in Penang up to 1948* (Tokyo: Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku, 1988), pp. 66–67.
11. See Rahmah Bujang, *Sejarah Perkembangan Drama Bangsawan di Tanah Melayu dan Singapura* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1975); Camoens, "The Wayang Parsi"; Tan Sooi Beng, *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1993); and the studies by Matthew Cohen.
12. Matthew Isaac Cohen, "On the Origin of the Komedie Stamboel", p. 314.
13. Camoens (1982, pp. 2–3) mentions that Sri Indramawan and Sri Mudawan were formed by the same owner as Sri Indra Bangsawan. This Sri Indra Bangsawan may be the same as Pushi's Indra Bangsawan. However, Cohen (2002, p. 107) mentions a certain Abdul Rahman as owner of the Sri Indramawan. The names of these troupes may be quite confusing and the information is scanty: a Prince of Wales Theatrical Company features in a picture from 1897, eight years after Sri Indramawan, also known as The Prince of Wales Theatrical Company, folded (see Plate 95, p. 119, in Falconer, 1987). Cohen also cites a Surabayan newspaper (March–May 1894) in describing how an Indra Bangsawan went belly-up after touring small towns in East Java (2002, pp. 108–109). However, in an earlier article citing another source, he speaks of the apparent failure of Pushi's Indra Bangsawan in Java, which made him sell his company to "Jaafar the Turk" (Cohen 2001, pp. 300–301, fn. 34). All this information does not tally with the success the Pushi's Indra Bangsawan encountered in Palembang in 1894–95. It may be that Pushi did experience financial problems, sold the troupe he had engaged for the Netherlands Indies, and continued in the Peninsula. It could also be that different companies are here referred to with the same name of Indra Bangsawan.
14. This illustration of the exploits of the Indra Bangsawan is based on Camoens (1982, pp. 2–16), an article in which the author painstakingly traces the information about the theatrical companies in *JP* and a few other newspapers. The performances of late November 1894 were advertised in *Bintang Timor*, a Peranakan Chinese newspaper from Singapore. One of these advertisements is reproduced in Tan (1993), p. 17.
15. (See Colour Plate 8.) So far I know of only one of these broadsheets that is preserved in an accessible library collection (University Library of Cambridge, Scott UR 6.22): an announcement of a one and only performance of the *Gul Bakawali* play by The Persian Ladies and Parsee Opera Company of Bombay, which I have not seen registered in any of the sources. It refers to a performance at a newly built stage in Queen Street or Kampung Boyan Lama, possibly at the beginning of the 1890s. The broadsheet was printed by Makhdum Sahib who will be discussed in the chapter (see also note 32).
16. Ahmat Adam, *The Vernacular Press*, pp. 22–37.

17. William R. Roff, *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States, 1876–1941* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 3–5.
18. Roff, *Bibliography*, p. 3. Not much is known of this early stage of the newspaper because none of the copies seems to have survived. The British Library holds a few copies from 1881 and a complete set of the newspaper from 1887 until its demise in 1895. This is probably due to the Copyright Act that was only made effective in the Straits Settlements in 1886. It contained the requirement of submitting three copies of every printed work to the government that sent one of the copies to the British Museum (Proudfoot 1994, pp. 6–7). These copies now form the core of the early printed collection held at the British Library (Gallop 1990, p. 107).
19. Ahmat Adam. *Sejarah dan Bibliografi Akbar dan Majalah Melayu abad kesembilan belas* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 58.
20. Around the same time the company also experienced financial problems. It may be that Munsyi Syeikh Muhammad Ali bin Ghulam Hussain al-Hindi took over as editor while the management of the company was taken up by others (Ahmat Adam 1992, p. 66, fn. 114; see also Nik Ahmad [1963, pp. 38–39], who mentions that Muhammad Said's widow took over and appointed a manager). Quite soon afterwards, Muhammad Ali seems to have left *JP* to set up his own periodical after he had come into a conflict with a correspondent, Muhammad bin Yaakub Ji Patel, whom he branded "a peranakan from Bombay living in Kampung Bengkulu", who did not know Malay and had his pieces written by Abdul Wahab, a teacher at the Malay school in Kampung Glam (*SM,* 21 November 1888, Vol. 1, no. 16, p. 3). This was a reaction to an earlier elongated rebuttal of the *JP* editor that the company would be sold to a Christian and the legacy of Muhammad Said would thus become "soiled" (Ahmat Adam, 1992, pp. 60–61; *JP*, 6 August 1888, Vol. XII, no. 591, pp. 2–3). Interestingly, the author of this reaction, possibly Muhammad bin Yaakub himself, refers to wise words he found in a periodical published by the Reverend Keasberry, and ends by quoting a *pantun* of the honourable Reverend. This missionary published several educational periodicals in the 1840–50s in Singapore, and also had printing facilities at his missionary school, where he trained pupils in the art of lithography and typography. Ironically, some of these pupils may have been instrumental in the development of a thriving Islamic printing industry from the 1860s onwards, while this reference provides a rare indication that the readership of his magazines apparently went beyond the small group of graduates from his school (cf. Putten 2006, pp. 426–27). This confusion also has left its marks on the reference books, which are unclear and contradictive on this point (Roff 1972; Ahmat Adam 1992).
21. I. Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books: A Provisional Account of Materials Printed in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920, Noting Holdings in Major Public Collections* (N.p.: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library University of Malaya, 1993), p. 40.

22. Also the honourable governor had promised to support the periodical by buying copies to be distributed to Malay vernacular schools (editorial quoted in Ahmat Adam 1992, p. 61).
23. Roff, *Bibliography*, p. 3.
24. Lee Geok Boi, *Pages from Yesteryear. A Look at the Printed Works of Singapore, 1819–1959* (Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, 1989), p. 26; personal communication with Torsten Tschacher.
25. Ibid., p. 26.
26. For further details, see I. Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books*.
27. Lee, *Pages from Yesteryear*, p. 27.
28. Cf. Fakhri, S.M.A.K. "Cues for Historiography?: Print Culture, Print Leaders and Print Mobility among Tamil Muslims in Southeast Asia, ca. 1875–1960" (1999), pp. 5–6.
29. Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books*, p. 32.
30. Ibid., pp. 40–41. See Maier (1993) for an intriguing picture of Albrecht's role in the cultural life of Batavia at the end of the nineteenth century.
31. Teuku Iskandar, *Kesusasteraan Klasik Melayu Sepanjang Abad* (Jakarta: Libra, 1995), p. 467.
32. (See Colour Plate 8.) The text of the announcement of the Persian Ladies and Parsee Opera Company of Bombay: *Wayang Parsi yang bergelar Persian Opera Company of Bombay hendak bermain pada ini malam di jalan Queen Street atau kampung Boyan Lama. Panggung wayang baharu diikat dengan batu* (University Library of Cambridge, Scott UR 6.22).
33. Camoens, "The Wayang Parsi", pp. 79–80.
34. Kathryn Hansen, *Grounds for Play. The Nautanki Theatre of North India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 86–94.
35. Hansen, "Language, Community, and the Theatrical Public", pp. 78–79.
36. See Kathryn Hansen, "The Migration of a Text: The Indar Sabha in Print and Performance", *Sangeet Natak*, Nos. 127–28 (1998), pp. 3–34.
37. There were, however, popular *wayang* stories made into *hikayat* and puppeteers may have also used handwritten outlines of the stories they performed.
38. See Julian Millie, ed., *Bidasari. Jewel of Malay Muslim Culture* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), pp. 237–49.
39. See Vladimir Braginsky and Anna Suvorova, "Translations from Urdu in Malay Traditional Literature" (forthcoming).
40. The original reads: *tak boleh dicap beberapa zaman*; Muhammad Ali, 1905, p. 133.
41. Annabel Teh Gallop, "Early Malay Printing: An Introduction to the British Library Collection", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 63, no. 1 (1990): 109.
42. Za'ba, 1939, p. 144, quoted in Braginsky and Suvorova.
43. *JP*, 2 September 1889, Vol. XIII, no. 646, p. 2.
44. Malay chirographic tradition is not renowned for its illuminations and illustrations in the manuscripts. Apart from a number of religious texts, diplomatic letters,

and a few important palace texts, little embellishment can be found in surviving collections of Malay manuscripts. In the nineteenth century, Reverend Keasberry produced illuminated title pages and headings for some of the Malay texts that he published, while his educational magazines contained several illustrations to attract children's attention to the marvels of modern technology (see Putten 2006). Keasberry continued to develop lithographic techniques for producing illustrations and published a few items with spectacularly coloured frontispieces, such as the *Hikayat Abdullah* (1849) and the magazine *Cermin Mata* (1858–59; see Lee 1989, plates 2 and 4).

45. See Kathryn Hansen, "The Migration of a Text".
46. Annabel Teh Gallop, "Early Malay Printing", p. 108.
47. See ibid., p. 101 for an image; or see Colour Plate 9.
48. The Reverend Keasberry (1811–75) was taught about printing techniques by the Reverend Medhurst in Batavia. Later in Singapore he developed this technique further by blending lithographic printing with a Malay manuscript tradition. The Malay author Abdullah bin Abdulkadir Munsyi was his assistant and the cooperation of these two men yielded several spectacularly lithographed texts (see Gallop 1990, pp. 96–98 and Proudfoot 1998, pp. 122–27).
49. Ahmat Adam, *Sejarah dan Bibliografi Akbar*, pp. 64–65.
50. Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books*, pp. 42–44.
51. The original translation by Von Dewall was published by Kolff in Batavia in 1879. It is unknown to me at this stage, whether Muhammad Siraj actually bought the rights for his edition, but he certainly did register it with the government in Singapore, claiming the rights for the Singapore edition. In 1908 Muhammad Siraj also edited a copy of *Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim* based on a printed version of the story that was published in the Netherlands in the 1840s. For this edition Muhammad Siraj ordered the Denodaya Press to print the copies on its letterpress (Proudfoot 1993, p. 485).
52. Matthew Isaac Cohen, "*Thousand and One Nights* at the Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre and Travelling Stories in Colonial Southeast Asia", *Middle Eastern Literatures* 7, no. 2 (2004): 235–46, Rahmah Bujang, *Sejarah Perkembangan Drama Bangsawan*.
53. See Jan van der Putten, "Tanggapan Pengarang Riau terhadap Budaya Bandar di Pulau Jiran", *Sari* 25 (2007): 147–69.

References

Adam, Ahmat. *Sejarah dan Bibliografi Akbar dan Majalah Melayu abad kesembilan belas*. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992.

Adam, Ahmat B. *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness (1855–1913)*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Programa Cornell University, 1995.

Bosma, Ulbe and Gijsbert Oonk. "Bombay Batavia. Parsi and Eurasian Variations

on the Middlemen Theme". *Mediators between State and Society*, edited by Nico Randeraad, pp. 17–40. Hilversum: Verloren, 1998.

Braginsky, Vladimir and Anna Suvorova. "Translations from Urdu in Malay Traditional Literature" (forthcoming).

Camoens, Cantius Leo. "The Wayang Parsi, Tiruan Wayang Parsi, Komidi Melayu and the bangsawan, 1887–1895". *Malaysia in History* 25 (1982): 1–20.

Cohen, Matthew Isaac. "On the Origin of the Komedie Stamboel. Popular Culture, Colonial Society, and the Parsi Theatre Movement." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 157, no. 2 (2001): 313–57.

———. "Border Crossings: Bangsawan in the Netherlands Indies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries". *Indonesia and the Malay World* 30, no. 87 (2002): 101–15.

———. "*Thousand and One Nights* at the Komedie Stamboel: Popular theatre and travelling stories in colonial Southeast Asia". *Middle Eastern Literatures* 7, no. 2 (2004): 235–46.

———. *The Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia, 1819–1903*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2006.

Falconer, John. *A Vision of the Past. A History of Early Photography in Singapore and Malaya. The Photographs of G. R. Lambert & Co., 1880–1910*. Singapore: Times Editions, 1987.

Fakhri, S.M.A.K. "Cues for Historiography? Print Culture, Print Leaders and Print Mobility among Tamil Muslims in Southeast Asia, ca. 1875–1960". Paper presented at the Conference on Southeast Asian Historiography since 1945, Penang, 30 July–1 August 1999.

Fujimoto, Helen. *The South Indian Muslim Community and the Evolution of the Jawi Peranakan in Penang up to 1948*. Tokyo: Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku, 1988.

Gallop, Annabel Teh. "Early Malay Printing: An Introduction to the British Library Collection". *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 63, no. 1 (1990): 85–124.

Hansen, Kathryn. *Grounds for Play. The Nautanki Theatre of North India.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992.

———. "The Migration of a Text: The Indar Sabha in Print and Performance". *Sangeet Natak*, Nos. 127–28 (1998): 3–34.

———. "Language, Community, and the Theatrical Public. Linguistic Pluralism and Change in the Nineteenth-century Parsi Theatre". In *India's Literary History. Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia, pp. 60–86. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004.

Iskandar, Teuku, *Kesusasteraan Klasik Melayu Sepanjang Abad*. Jakarta: Libra, 1995.

Lee Geok Boi. *Pages from Yesteryear. A Look at the Printed Works of Singapore, 1819–1959*. Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, 1989.

Maier, Henk. "Boredom in Batavia: A Catalogue of Books in 1898". In *Text/Politics in Island Southeast Asia. Essays in Interpretation*, edited by D. M. Roskies, pp. 131–56. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1993.

Millie, Julian, ed. *Syair Bidasari. Jewel of Malay Muslim Culture*. Bibliotheca Indonesica Vol. 31. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004.

Muhammad Ali bin almarhum Ghulam Husin al-Hindi, Munsyi Syeikh (translator). *Hikayat Gul Bakawali. Artinya ceretera Bunga dan Peri Wijaya Mala.* 3rd ed. Singapore: Denodaya Press, 1905.

Nik Ahmad bin Haji Nik Hassan, "The Malay Press". *Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 6336, no. 1 (1963): 37–78.

Proudfoot, Ian. *Early Malay Printed Books: A Provisional Account of Materials Printed in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920, Noting Holdings in Major Public Collections*. N.p.: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library University of Malaya, 1993.

———. "Malay Books Printed in Bombay: A Report on Sources for Historical Bibliography". *Kekal Abadi* 13, no. 3 (1994): 1–20.

———. "Lithography at the Crossroads of the East". *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, no. 27 (1998): 113–31.

Putten, Jan van der. "Abdullah and the Missionaries". *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 162–64 (2006): 407–40.

———. "Tanggapan Pengarang Riau terhadap Budaya Bandar di Pulau Jiran". *Sari* 25 (2007): 147–69.

Rahmah Bujang. *Sejarah Perkembangan Drama Bangsawan di Tanah Melayu dan Singapura*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1975.

Reena Singh. *A Journey Through Singapore*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 1995.

Roff, William R. *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States, 1876–1941*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Tan Sooi Beng. *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1993.

6

RELIGION AND THE UNDERMINING OF BRITISH RULE IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING THE GREAT WAR

Kees van Dijk

On 29 October 1914, a few months after the outbreak of World War I, Turkey joined in on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On 11 November, Sultan Mehmed V proclaimed a holy war. His action left no shadow of doubt that religion obliged all Muslims in the world to side with Turkey and its two allies. To renege was a sin.[1] Islam had become a factor in the war. The *jihad* proclamation, Pan-Islamic sentiments presenting the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph,[2] and feelings of Muslim solidarity combined to form a potentially powerful mix. It was no novelty for the Ottoman Empire to be viewed as a possible ally by Muslims threatened by Western colonial expansion; in Southeast Asia especially, the Dutch colonial authorities considered this a likely source of unrest. Now the bare fact that Turkey had entered the war had added a new dimension. It meant that Muslims worldwide could develop an aversion to the Allied Powers and become pro-German. Their pro-Turkish sentiments had already been strengthened by the Italo-Turkish War of 1911–12 in Libya, and by the wars Turkey had fought in the Balkans in 1912–13. In British India, for instance, Muslims, vowing of their loyalty to the British Crown, had protested the position taken by London in the Balkan Wars,

which they construed as amounting to a war against the Balkan Muslims.[3] In Singapore, soldiers of the 5th Light Infantry Battalion, composed of Indian soldiers and stationed in the city, had raised money for Turkish charities during the Italo-Turkish War.[4]

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia similar actions were taken by other local Muslim communities. In the Netherlands Indies, the domestic display of portraits of the Kaiser and his wife, and of the Sultan of Turkey, raised doubts about the loyalty of local Muslims as Dutch subjects. At the end of 1915, colonial officials inspecting village houses in Central Java discovered to their dismay that this was a very popular taste, and it was viewed by the government as indicative of anti-Allied attitudes. Muslims in the Archipelago also reportedly rejoiced in Gallipoli and other Allied setbacks. Malay-language nationalist papers published in the Indies testified to the same sympathies and antipathies; Dutch-language newspapers, on the other hand, were most hated by the Indonesians because of the way in which the population and the nationalist movement were depicted and vilified in their articles, and because of their fiercely anti-German tone.[5] In a September 1915 speech to the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements (British Malaya), Governor Sir A.H. Young admitted that the feelings of the local Muslim community "were stirred deeply". A "vast majority" had remained loyal, but "there were also a few fanatics who preached extreme doctrines of religious hate".[6] Dissent and dreams about contributing to the downfall of the British Empire could ripen in a situation in which British prestige was damaged. Rumours circulating among Indian soldiers in Singapore intimated "that there would soon be a German Raj instead of a British Raj".[7] All kinds of other stories were invented to depict Germany as a perfect ally. One was that many Germans had converted to Islam; another told of "the German Emperor's daughter being married to the heir apparent of Turkey".[8] Conviction that the German Emperor had converted to Islam, and had taken the name "Haji Mohammed William Kaiser German" also grew among the soldiers.[9] In India, the situation was no different. In the first years of the war, a feeling that Germany was certain to defeat Russia first, and thereon, perhaps Great Britain and France, spread among the population. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, had to confess that this was "the sort of theory widespread in the bazaars and amongst the uneducated native classes, and it does a lot of harm for it creates a feeling of uncertainty and unrest".[10]

Germany had prepared well for this battle for hearts and minds. Within the framework of the *Weltpolitik* on which Germany had embarked in 1897, one of the regions in the world that civilian and military policy-makers in Berlin had turned their attention to was the Middle East. Aspiring to play a leading role on the international scene and entering into competition with Great Britain for world maritime and economic supremacy, Germany had

played the role of a trusted and strong military friend of the beleaguered Ottoman Empire since the end of the nineteenth century. To highlight Berlin's benign attitude, Kaiser Wilhelm visited Istanbul in 1898 (it was his second visit, as he had been there earlier in 1889). During his 1898 visit, the Kaiser did his utmost to praise Islam. To show his appreciation of Muslim tradition, he visited the grave of Saladin and commissioned a marble tomb to be built for the remains of this legendary hero of the Crusades. He also flattered Sultan Abdulhamid II by referring to him as Caliph. In Damascus at the end of his tour, he declared that the Sultan "and the 300 million Muslims scattered across the globe who revere him as their Caliph, can rest assured that the German Emperor is, and will at all times remain, their friend".[11]

Kaiser Wilhelm's visit paid off. He was called the "Protector of Turkey", and hailed as the "personal and political friend of His Majesty Abdulhamid".[12] By that time German officers had become instrumental in modernizing and training the Ottoman Army for over sixty years. This effort culminated in the appointment of Lieutenant General Otto Liman von Sanders as head of a German military mission in 1913. In January the following year, Liman von Sanders was promoted to be Commander of the First Army Corps by imperial edict, ultimately becoming Inspector General of the Ottoman army.[13] On the civilian front, Berlin had taken pains to send diplomats to Istanbul who were well acquainted with local circumstances. This strategy earned Germany the praise of the renowned Dutch Islamologist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936). In his eyes, the Dutch legation in Istanbul and the local Dutch consulates in the Middle East were staffed by incompetent nitwits, persons who could not read Arabic and were incapable of making a sound judgement on Islamic developments.[14] On the scholarly front, German geologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists had been exploring the length and breadth of the Middle East already for over a decade, making contacts and gathering information which would later be put to good use in the confrontation with British forces in the region.[15]

The Ottoman call for a *jihad* on the side of the Germans was the ultimate reward for this long policy with the engagement with the Middle East. In the British and French colonies, and in the Russian Empire, any such summons could only make the domestic situation more explosive by setting Muslims against infidel, alien rule. Another disturbing prospect for the Allies was that the appeal could make Muslim soldiers in the armies of Great Britain, Russia, and France reluctant to fight the enemy, or worse, motivate them to commit acts of sabotage or rise in mutiny. The British were particularly troubled by such prospects. Soldiers from their colonies comprised a significant contribution to the war effort. During the Great War, over a million Indian troops served overseas, fighting in Europe, the Middle East, and in Africa. Some 62,000

of them were killed.[16] Some troops were trusted more than others. Above all, regiments recruited among the Muslim frontier tribes, who the Viceroy of British India, Lord Hardinge, reported to London, as being "so far fanatical" that, unlike Muslim soldiers from elsewhere, they did not "like fighting against the Turks."[17] To avoid complications, British Army Command took care that units well known for the strongly Islamic disposition of the troops, such as those made up of Pathans, did not have to fight in regions close to the holy places of Islam.[18] The Russian Army faced similar problems. Muslim conscript soldiers from its European and Siberian provinces engaged in battles with Ottoman, German, and Austro-Hungarian troops. To respect their religious sentiments, prayers were held in improvised field mosques, and when the Tsar inspected his troops, he visited mosques as well as churches. Doubts about the loyalty of the Muslim population were especially strong with regard to Muslims from the Caucasus and Turkestan. These misgivings proved to be not without reason. Being exempt from conscription these Muslims did not serve in the Army, but in 1916 when the Russian Government tried to enlist them as labourers behind the front, the decision triggered unrest and rebellions.[19]

Even in the Netherlands Indies, the *jihad* proclamation caused anxiety among the Dutch residents. Though neutral, the Netherlands did not escape being mentioned as a target in the holy war. Besides addressing itself to the subjects of Great Britain, France, and Russia, the Universal Proclamation to All Peoples of Islam or the "*Jihad* Document" of November 1914 called upon the forty million Muslims in the Netherlands Indies to free themselves from the colonial yoke, and to kill or chase away the semi-civilized Dutch; this was an appeal which was later rectified after Dutch protests.[20] In words that sound strikingly familiar today, C. Snouck Hurgronje, who was one of the persons most haunted by the spectre of Pan-Islamism around the turn of the century, left no doubt that he abhorred the content of the *jihad* proclamation. In a number of letters to the Dutch Ministry of the Colonies, he stressed that the pamphlet condoned the idea that a holy war was not just a campaign waged by armies, but could also be pursued by gangs of robbers and translated into individual assassination attempts.[21] Convinced that a holy war had been nothing more than a historical concept for many Muslims, Snouck also blamed the document for the revival of a medieval, fanatical incitement to religious hatred.[22]

COUNTERING THE *JIHAD* PROCLAMATION

Great Britain, Russia, and France had far more to worry about. The loyalty of their Muslim soldiers and civilian population was in jeopardy. The Ottoman

proclamation of a holy war was aimed principally at the Muslim subjects of those three colonial powers. Russia tried to minimize the damage with a counter-*fatwa* issued by the *mufti* of the Urals in which he urged Muslims to be "patriotic". The *mufti* reminded them that "the Russian state is our fatherland, near and dear to our hearts, the hearts of Muslims". More than a million Muslims are said to have responded, stressing that they were "patriots" and "true sons of the fatherland".[23]

Great Britain reacted by blaming German machinations for the Ottoman involvement in the war. It also tried to convince its Muslim subjects that the war had nothing to do with religion. After the Ottomans had entered the war, a lengthy statement was issued and then translated into the main languages spoken by Great Britain's Muslim subjects in India, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Great pains were taken to highlight how treacherously the Ottoman government had acted, and how great a role Germany had played in inciting it and other Muslims against Great Britain. The conclusion reached was that they had joined the war due to instigations of the Germans who had entered the Ottoman army. Yet, whatever the Germans did or said, this could not be allowed to alter the loyalty of "the seventy million Muslims in India, and the millions of them in Africa, the Malay States and other regions who live under the protection of the most exalted banners of justice".[24] At the end of the statement the assurance was given that the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain was not a religious matter, and that the armed forces of Great Britain, France, and Russia would respect the holy places and shrines of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Middle East. Provided that the Ottomans did not interfere with the pilgrimage to Mecca by Muslims from British dominions and protectorates, they would not attack Jeddah. In other statements, the British Government reiterated that "His Majesty's most loyal Moslem subjects" could be assured that the war did not concern questions of a religious nature and that the holy places of Islam would remain immune from attacks.[25]

Not yet sure that such statements would have the desired effect, a propaganda offensive targeting Muslim subjects in the British colonies was launched. After the commencement of the war a plethora of Indian rulers and organizations had already pledged material and military support to the British cause. A statement by the Viceroy listing these expressions of loyalty had been read out in London, in Parliament, amid great enthusiasm. The entrance of the Ottomans into the war stimulated a new cascade of statements by religious and political leaders, and in an attempt to dissuade waverers from taking the side of Germany, pro-British manifestations and declarations organized and made by Muslims were widely publicized. Again these included statements by

Indian rulers. The initiative had come from the Aga Khan, who in his own declaration expressed his "deep sorrow" that the Ottoman Government had joined the side of Germany, and that "acting under German orders is madly attempting to wage a most unprovoked war against such mighty sovereigns as the King Emperor and the Tsar of Russia".[26] Like the statement of the British Government, the Aga Khan put the full blame on Berlin and Vienna. Germany and Austria were depicted as the enemies of Islam. The war was not "the true and free will of the Sultan but of German officers and other non-Moslems who have forced him to their bidding". Austria had taken Bosnia, and Germany had "long been plotting to become the suzerain of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia". Reduced to "a tool in German hands", the Ottomans had "not gone to war for the cause of Islam or in defence of her independence. Thus our only duty as Moslems now is to remain loyal, faithful and obedient to our temporal and secular allegiance".[27]

The Malay Peninsula, where the British presence in the interior dated back only a few decades at the most, also had to be safeguarded against German and Ottoman agitation. As it had a large Indian immigrant and Muslim indigenous population, it could equally form a fertile target for agitation. Likewise with China, the enemy of Great Britain's ally Japan, the British were not overly confident about the disposition of the Chinese population. To counter anti-British propaganda, requests were sent to the colonial administrations in Colombo, Hong Kong, and India for circulars or pamphlets printed in vernacular languages "to prove the justice of the British cause in the present war".[28] The statement of the Aga Khan was distributed among the Malay Muslims. This was repeated with similar expressions of loyalty by other Indian princes in which they implored their Muslim subjects through exclamations that it was "their bounden duty at this critical juncture to adhere firmly to their old and tried loyalty to the British Government", and sentences of like purport. The "loyal resolutions" issued by the All India Muslim League and other Indian Muslim organizations, and reports about mass meetings in India during which Muslim tribal chiefs and others had spoken out in support of Great Britain were also assiduously circulated.[29] The aim was first and foremost to be assured of the loyalty of the Indians, in particular the "Sikhs, Punjabis, Pathans and Tamils of the petty-trading and coolie classes".[30]

Great care was taken to see that the Malay rulers and the Sultan of Brunei were provided with such information in order to remove any reservations they might have had in speaking out in support of Great Britain. The result was reassuring. As was the case in British India, the Malay rulers pledged their loyalty and that of their subjects. In November 1914, the Sultans of

Perak and Selangor, and the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan signed a joint statement forbidding the inhabitants of their states "to render any assistance whatever to Turkey" or "to raise or be influenced by any agitation in favour of participation on the side of the Ottomans and Germany".[31] The fourth ruler of the Federated Malay States, the Sultan of Pahang, issued a statement of his own.[32] In his statement, the Sultan of Pahang praised the British colonial administration, stating that the Federated Malay states "had never gained any advantage from the Turkish Government", and that he was "sure the inhabitants of this State of Pahang have felt and understood the abundant prosperity, happiness and freedom they have enjoyed since Pahang came under British Protection".[33] Of the rulers of the Unfederated States, the Sultan of Kelantan held a public service to pray for the success of the British army. The British Advisor in Kelantan informed his superiors in Singapore by telegram that the Sultan had asked him to convey the assurance of the loyalty of himself and his people, and that he was confident that there would be no disturbances in Kelantan. The Sultans of Johor and Trengganu issued similar expressions of their loyalty to the British Crown. To underline this, the former put his own personal army at the disposal of the British.[34] In early 1915, the British military commander Brigadier General Dudley Ridout in Singapore turned to a leader of the Arab community, Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf, one of the most influential Muslim leaders in the city, to convince him of the evils of the Ottoman Empire and the vile role Germany had played. Ridout, a man who seems to have been completely ignorant of the actual sentiments of Singapore's Muslim community, was confident that he had succeeded in having Sayyid Umar abandon his initially pro-Ottoman stand.[35]

In hindsight, it is difficult to assess how effective such statements were. Probably they barely raised a ripple. The assessments of Young and Hardinge about the aforementioned Straits Settlements and India point out that the statements could not sway the population. The reaction in the Netherlands Indies may also be adduced as an indication of this. The British did their best to counter Ottoman and German propaganda in the Netherlands Indies, and to sway the disposition of the Muslim population. One of the reasons for this was probably that the Arab community in Southeast Asia, most of them from the Hadramawt, was highly international, with many business and family links between these Arabs who had settled in the various cities of the region. Another consideration would have been to convince Sikhs and other Indians living in the Dutch colony of British right in this matter. The consul in Batavia reproduced the lengthy statement by London, justifying the war in the Dutch-language press, from which it was copied for the Malay-language newspapers. The testimonies of loyalty by Indian rulers were likewise

brought to the attention of the inhabitants of the Netherlands Indies (where Malay newspapers, in fact, copied news telegrams about such facts), as were a statement of loyalty by Egyptian Islamic leaders, including the Shaykh al-Islam and Rector of the al-Azhar University, and vows by Muslims in Sierra Leone, and by the Chief *Qadi* of Cyprus.[36] Such reports were viewed with suspicion by the editors of the Malay-language newspaper. It was suggested that, at best, such Muslim leaders in India and elsewhere had fallen victim to Allied propaganda. More trust was placed in the denials by the Ottoman consul in Batavia. These, it was stressed in the Sarekat Islam newspaper *Oetoesan-Hindia*, confirmed what had been thought all along: the Ottoman Government was not wrong, and their stand was supported by its genuine subjects and by the genuine Muslims in the rest of the world. Simultaneously, the British reports about the support of Islamic leaders, and about German and Ottoman schemes to incite the Muslim population in British India and elsewhere to rebel, were dismissed as being inspired by fear. They were also used to call attention to the repressive nature of British and French rule which, it was added (perhaps so as not to sound *too* rebellious), were worse than Dutch rule.[37] B.J.O. Schrieke of the Bureau of Native Affairs concluded in a report in 1917 that Muslims in the Netherlands Indies, had reacted with scorn when they learned about the statements of loyalty to British rule, while the Islamic press almost unanimously believed it impossible that a true Muslim would fight against Germany or Turkey.[38] Sometimes, the reports were counter-effective, and elicited the opposite result. For example, a poem in another Sarekat Islam newspaper, *Sinar Djawa*, proclaimed that rulers who remained loyal to the British were "egoists".[39] *Oetoesan-Hindia* copied an article by *Le petit Hindoestani* stressing that true Muslims did not attach any value to what the Aga Khan did or said. After all, he was not a genuine Sunni Muslim (as almost all Indonesians and Malaysians are), but the leader of a Shi'ite sect, who, to add insult to injury, dressed as an Englishman and, with a chin shaven clean as a nickel, enjoyed the night life of London.[40]

INDIAN ACTIVISTS

One of the immediate concerns the holy war appeal posed to the countries at war with the Ottoman Empire was that prudence and vigilance had to be observed in employing Muslim soldiers enlisted in their armies. Berlin had lost no time in disseminating the message. Almost immediately after the *jihad* proclamation had been issued, leaflets about the holy war were dropped on the battlefields in Europe by German aeroplanes. On the Western Front, the British and French army command were certainly concerned about

potential agitation by, and among, Muslim soldiers. In France, the British Army had to be on its guard against activities of agitators who wanted to dissuade Indian soldiers against fighting the Germans. One such activist was S.R. Rana, the head of the Indian Revolutionary Party in France. He had married a German wife, Teresa Listz, in a hotel in London in accordance with Hindu customs a decade earlier. She was equally opposed to Indian troops fighting in France, and while living in Marseilles, actually campaigned against it. Rana himself went as far as to try to enter the French Foreign Legion in an effort to obtain French nationality and be allowed to act as an interpreter for the Indian troops.[41] Alerted to such intentions, the India Office compiled a list of dangerous persons who should not be engaged as interpreters for Indian troops.

In an attempt to encourage desertion, Germany did its best to create the impression that Muslim (and Hindu) prisoners-of-war and deserters would be treated well. In the north of France, every care was taken to ensure captured Allied Muslim soldiers could keep their food prescripts. In Germany, a special *Halbmondlager* (Crescent Camp) was built near Wünsdorf, not far from Berlin.[42] Its mosque, completed in July 1915, was the only one in Germany at that time.[43] Prisoners were kept busy with sporting activities and even outings to Berlin. Magazines published pictures of the beautiful mosque erected, and drew attention to the special food served in the camp.[44]

Germany could also count on the sympathy of Muslims from India and Egypt living in exile who had already been busy agitating against British colonial rule in the pre-war years. One such person was M.M. Rifat, an American citizen of Egyptian origin, who had taken up residence in Geneva. In September 1914, he addressed a letter to the German people. On behalf of the Muslim population of North Africa, Turkey, Persia, and India, he expressed his sympathy and admiration for the German emperor, the German army, and the German nation. While England held India, Egypt, and other Oriental countries in political and economic servitude; while France was murdering people in Morocco; and, while Italy waged a war of extermination in Libya, Rifat noted that the German and Austrian people had testified to their friendship with the peoples in the East. He appealed to all Eastern nations to give Germany and Austria all the financial, moral, and armed support they could. A victory for Germany and Austria was a victory for Asia and Africa over the pirates of the Triple Entente. In a second public letter, addressed to the German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Rifat listed the crimes committed by "perfide Albion". In the name of freedom, Great Britain had bombarded Alexandria in 1882; had violated the neutral status of the Suez Canal; had attacked the peaceful Somalis on

the pretext of fighting the Mahdi; had fanned the carnage in the Balkans; had waged the Opium War on China; and, had divided up Persia together with the barbaric Russians. In short, the history of the British Empire had been one of "gigantic intrigues, deceitful tragedies, treacheries, which had cost the lives of millions of innocent peoples". He concluded by asserting that the Ottoman Empire was the legitimate sovereign of Egypt, and the Egyptian people were urged to fight the British aggressor.[45] Evidently, Rifat's public letters did not fail to make an impression. In the Netherlands Indies they were used to cast doubt on British propaganda. *Oetoesan-Hindia* tried to impress on its readers how people under British rule really thought could be inferred from statements by Rifat, who stressed that Egyptians who believed in British promises of independence were stupid, as well as from reports on bombing attempts in India.[46]

THE MUTINY

Beyond the Middle East, German consuls, naval officers, and private citizens were well prepared for war. Some of them were assigned a special role in an elaborate scheme to subvert colonial rule in India; the consequences of this would be felt in the French colonies, British Malaya, and even in the Netherlands Indies. People such as Rifat and Shiyamaji Krishnavarma were not only of use to Germany for political propaganda which would cause soldiers to desert or refuse to fight, but also to foment anti-Allied unrest in Muslim and Hindu regions, pinning down British, French, and Russian soldiers who could otherwise have been sent to the front. Active resistance against a British presence loomed, and was to be organized in the Persian Gulf by the former German consul Wilhelm Wassmuss. There, wearing a "Persian costume, speaking their language fluently and posing as a Muslim convert, he began to stir up the local tribes in a campaign of murder, violence and sabotage aimed at driving the British from the Gulf, or forcing them to divert troops, badly needed elsewhere, to the spot".[47]

In India, the British could equally be harassed. Indian revolutionaries presented Germany with the opportunity to do just that. In early 1914, Indians living in San Francisco had put out feelers in an attempt to assess whether after a war between Germany and Great Britain had become a reality, Berlin would be prepared to finance an insurrection in British India and provide the necessary weapons. The initiative had come from Har Dayal, a former Oxford student, who as a fugitive in San Francisco, headed the "Ghadr" or "Mutiny Movement". Berlin did respond, and in Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, New York, and a number of other American cities, Germans

diplomats, other German citizens, and people of German origin began to cooperate with British Indians to organize an uprising. The idea of hurting Great Britain, France, and Russia through fomenting unrest among their Muslim subjects gained new momentum after July 1914. It was a prospect enthusiastically supported by the Kaiser and the Chief of the German General Staff, General Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von Moltke. Work to effectuate the scheme commenced immediately and also involved Indians living in exile in Switzerland. It became an even more effective strategy after the Ottomans entered the war on the German-Austrian side and a *jihad* had been proclaimed. A senior colonial official, Evelyn C. Ellis, concluded in retrospect that soon "natives [were active] throughout the whole of India, throughout the whole of the Far East … paid by German gold".[48] As in the Mutiny of 1857, Indian Muslims and Hindus (and this time, also Sikhs) united in the effort to chase the British away.[49]

Actual preparations for a rising were made and a large propaganda campaign took shape, aiming to arouse anti-Allied political and religious sentiments, and have Indian soldiers mutiny and kill the British; in a similar vein to the Holy War campaign, it stressed that Germany was an ally in the anti-colonial struggle.[50] Ghadr agents sent from the United States to India and Southeast Asia, and other agitators also made much of the early German successes in the war, suggesting that the collapse of the British Empire was near. The main target of German-Indian agitation was India, but contacts were also made with local Muslims in Southeast Asia and Indian soldiers stationed in the Malay Peninsula, Penang, Singapore, and Burma.[51] The plotters harboured ambitious ideas. A military rebellion was planned in Calcutta for Christmas Day in 1915, which they hoped would be followed by a popular uprising. The preparations for the revolt were carried out under the direction of the General Staff of the German Army in Berlin. The military attaché at the German embassy in Washington, Captain Franz von Papen, co-ordinated the procurement of weapons in the United States.[52] In cooperation with the naval attaché, Captain Karl Boy-Ed, he was also responsible for setting up a German ring of spies and saboteurs in the United States. Before the end of 1915, Franz von Papen was recalled to Berlin at American request.

The Netherlands Indies was no more than a sideshow to all of this, but it nonetheless remained significant. In Asia, the plotters' headquarters was in Shanghai. To assist subversive activities in the British possessions in Asia, three special departments were created: in the Netherlands Indies, Siam, and Persia. They were headed by German diplomatic or consular staff who, when necessary, could call on the help of German residents. In the Netherlands Indies, those involved included the consuls in Surabaya, Padang, and Sulawesi;

former army officers who had found employment on estates; and, members of the mercantile community.[53] In Batavia, the acting German Consul-General, E. Windels, did not play a key role in the conspiracy. He attended some of the meetings, but was not overly enthusiastic about the scheme which he considered unrealistic. In his view, proper organization and planning were in short supply. More important roles were played by Emil Helfferich; his brother, Theodor, the director of the Batavia branch of Behn, Meyer and Co; and A. Diehn, a German businessman who had been manager and chairman of directors of the Singapore branch of the same German company before the war.[54]

The Netherlands Indies formed a kind of stepping stone, an intermediate station via which weapons bought from America and the Philippines, and money, seditious pamphlets, agents, could be smuggled into India, Burma, and British Malaya. The smuggling of weapons, in particular, turned into a great fiasco. In the middle of 1915, two ships, which British intelligence suspected of carrying weapons destined for India and Burma were indeed approaching the territorial waters of Netherlands Indies. They were the oil tanker *Maverick*, owned by the Maverick Steamship Co. (of which the Behn, Meyer and Co. firm was the agent in Batavia), and the schooner *Henry S.* (chartered by one Albert Wehde, an American jeweller from Chicago). The plan was that the rifles and revolvers on board the *Maverick* would be transhipped to fishing boats chartered by German accomplices in Batavia, to transport them further to Bengal. The destination of the weapons of the *Henry S.* was Thailand, the only independent state in Southeast Asia. From there, they had to be smuggled overland into Burma.[55] In reality, neither of the two ships, nervously awaited by the Dutch Navy in the colony, had any weapons an board. The *Maverick* had failed to rendezvous along the Mexican Pacific coast with yet another ship on which the arms had been shipped out of the United States. Early on in her voyage it had even been decided to burn the seditious pamphlets she carried when a British man-of-war hove in sight. In the Philippines, the United States Government, having become aware of the plans, had ordered the cargo from the *Henry S.* be removed.

Nevertheless some propaganda materials did reach the Netherlands Indies, including pamphlets and copies of the movement's newspaper, *Ghadr*, with slogans such as "Rise Indians, Rise" and their calls for a Holy War. Some were intended to influence local Muslims, Sikhs, and other Indians living in the colony, while others were to be forwarded elsewhere. The Netherlands Indies was one of the places through which inflammatory pamphlets printed in San Francisco, Germany, and the Middle East were to reach British India and the Malay Peninsula. Sometimes crews of merchant ships and mail boats were

bribed to smuggle such literature to the Netherlands Indies, or mail it from ports called at along the way. In other cases, they were sent directly from the United States or Germany. It frequently happened that to have pamphlets, some of them written by Rifat, reach Java and Sumatra, the British or the Dutch mail was used. Pamphlets printed in Germany, for instance, were first sent to the German consulate in Amsterdam and to the German embassy in The Hague. From there, they were handed in at Dutch post offices, addressed to Windels in Batavia or to members of his staff. Such parcel-post packages at times escaped the attention of the colonial censor, as postal officers would have found it very difficult to imagine that parcels from Holland contained seditious literature and so letters sent to the colonies from there were generally free from such censorship.

Nevertheless, the Dutch authorities in Holland and the Netherlands Indies did all they could to prevent such shipments by mail, banning the import of seditious pamphlets and newspapers, and confiscating issues when they laid their hands on them. Their primary reason for doing so was to avoid complications with London, but there were other considerations as well. In part the colonial authorities were motivated by a sense of solidarity among the European colonial powers, which had to help one another when confronted with insurrections by the peoples over whom they ruled. More important was the fact that the colonial administrators in this instance had their own concrete fears which prompted them to act. One such concern was that unrest in British India or the Malay Peninsula might spread to the Netherlands Indies, where — although the colonial authorities were unaware of the nature of Indo-German plot — they and other Dutch persons feared that Germany might try to seize power with the help of local Muslim accomplices.

There was, however, an even more concrete danger. The pamphlets were not of a subtle nature and would have been quite shocking to the European mind of the day. In calls for the massacre of the British in British India, for instance, sentences such as "arise in wrath and slay them!" were not shunned, and while most appealed to Muslims, Hindus were not forgotten. One of the documents seized in Batavia and which had been sent from San Francisco to a staff member of the German consulate, was written in Sanskrit and contained a picture of Kali, the goddess of destruction.[56] The pamphlets printed and distributed by members of the Indo-German conspiracy fitted perfectly with Turco-German efforts to incite a Holy War and to subvert Allied rule. With respect to Russia, efforts aimed at the Muslim population of the Caucasus and Central Asia[57] were coordinated by Berlin to open a third front. Its pamphlets were equally inflammatory. They called for the indiscriminate slaying of Christians (making an exception

for nationals of Ottoman allies in the war), promising rewards from God to those who did.[58]

Another disquieting fact was that such pamphlets were also sent to individual Arabs and Indonesians in Java and Sumatra, who would have no difficulty substituting the words Dutch and the Netherlands where the text spoke of British and Great Britain. Scores of anti-British pamphlets, it was claimed in the newspaper *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* in March 1916, had been distributed among the native population.[59] Some of these were in Arabic, which only part of the population could read. Sometimes Malay was used. Among the latter type of pamphlets was a *Seroean Party Nasional Hindia*. The Appeal of the Indian Nationalist Party called attention to the wars Great Britain had fought to acquire new territory, including the Boer War, announcing that the moment for revenge had come. To the alarm of the authorities, in 1915 and 1916 the appeal was sent in large quantities to the Netherlands Indies by mail. Among the addressees were offices of local branches of the nationalist mass organization, the Sarekat Islam, and a number of institutions of higher education in Indonesians such as, the School for Native Civil Servants in Magelang, and the School for Native Teachers in Probolinggo. Some of the pamphlets reaching the Netherlands Indies were even in Dutch. Early in 1916, shipments from Holland addressed to Windels were confiscated. These included about three hundred booklets originally published by the Indian National Party, entitled *Is Indië loyal?* (*Are the Indies Loyal?*).[60]

Though fomenting unrest in British India was the major objective of the Indo-German conspiracy, British Malaya was not overlooked. The border of Malaya with the Netherlands Indies was well suited for smuggling persons and goods, but it seems the conspirators were unable to exploit these natural advantages. In May 1915 one of their agents, George Frederick Vincent Kraft, an Indo-European from the Netherlands Indies, travelled from Genoa to Singapore via Java and Sumatra, where he was arrested on arrival.[61] Underestimation of British intelligence work also spelled the downfall of Abd al-Salam Rafiq. Abdul Selam, as he came to be known in Java, was a stylishly European-clad Muslim, whose father had been a prominent figure in the Islamic community in Dalhousie, in Kashmir. He himself was well versed in Urdu and Arabic, and it was said that he knew the Qur'an by heart. In October 1914, he arrived in Batavia, where he served as a contact between Theodor Helfferich and British Indians visiting Batavia to discuss the sending of arms and money to India. One Dutch civil servant described him as "a very sly person… evidently resentful and not too much hampered by scruples of conscious".[62] Within days of his arrival, he had sent a pamphlet to Pahang in the Malay Peninsula by

ordinary mail, in which he called for self-government and touched on the demands of Islam and a holy war.

The postmark on the letters put the British on his track. Abdul Selam was trapped. In March 1915, he was arrested. Deportation threatened, which certainly would have meant arrest by the British.[63] In the eyes of the British Government, the Indo-German plot assumed al-Qaeda-like proportions. London became extremely alarmed. One of the measures it took was to cordon off the Netherlands Indies. Preventing enemy trade was one reason for this, but the confiscation of literature produced by the Indo-German plot and the capture of its agents took priority over this. For similar reasons, surveillance in the North Sea was tight. Allied control of Dutch shipping and mail was stepped up further after the United States entered the war in April 1917, and the British Government feared that America joining the Allied forces might make the Netherlands Indies even more important as a base for Indo-German subversion in Asia. The British Consul General in Batavia, W.R.D. Beckett, told a Dutch intelligence officer that British Indians from the United States and "fanatical Germans" would be attracted to the Netherlands Indies as a place of residence. This would turn the colony into the centre of the Indo-German plot.[64] Such fears inspired London to decree in the middle of 1917 that Dutch ships would no longer be allowed to carry ordinary letters and parcel post.

THE SINGAPORE MUTINY

The Indo-German and the Turco-German schemes rekindled the long-standing, lingering fear held by the British about other powers encroaching on the British presence in India. Were Germany to succeed in its intentions in the Middle East through alliance with the Ottoman Empire, it might gain a direct access route from Europe to India. To make the threat to the British position in India even more daunting, German agents did their utmost to persuade the Emir of Afghanistan, Habibullah, to turn on the British as well.[65]

Against this background, any unrest among Indian soldiers in Asia and among the general population was an alarming prospect. In Asia, the British Army did indeed encounter some problems. Though on the whole commands were obeyed, occasionally, orders to sail abroad or be sent into battle resulted in acts of disobedience among Indian soldiers reluctant to do so. In early December 1914, in British Malaya, the soldiers of Malay States Guides made up of Sikhs, Pathans, and Punjabi Muslims from Northern India, reneged on their earlier promise to go and fight at the front in East Africa.[66] Their sympathies were with Germany. One of their tasks had been to guard the Tanglin

Barracks where German residents and prisoners-of-war were interned. One of the German prisoners, Julius Lauterbach, the prize-officer of the famous German raider, the *Emden*, which had been disturbing shipping in the seas between the Malay Peninsula and India, recalled that the sentries of the Malay States Guides had called out "Emden officer, Emperor Wilhelm, Enver-Bei, Islam, hurrah!" to him after the Ottomans joined the war.[67]

The British identified Kasim Ismail Mansur, a Muslim trader originally from Surat, as one of the persons who had encouraged the soldiers to refuse to be sent to Africa.[68] The following month, a corporal from the Mule Battery of the Malay States Guards, Osman Khan, asked the same Kasim Ismail Mansur to address a letter to the Ottoman consul in Rangoon, vowing that he and other soldiers were ready to fight for the Ottomans and asking the Ottoman Government to send a warship to Singapore to fetch them. After the colonial authorities in Burma had intercepted the message, Osman Khan and Kasim Ismail Mansur were charged with treason and later executed. Another person the British blamed for the stirring up of religious sentiments was one Subedar in the Guides, Muhamed Zamen. After their refusal, the Malay States Guides, with the exception of its Mule Battery, were withdrawn to Taiping.

In Rangoon, where Ghadr agents were also active, Muslim Pathan soldiers of the 130th Baluch Infantry mutinied in December 1914, refusing to fight against Ottoman troops. Earlier in August while still stationed in Bombay, one of its soldier had already bayoneted a British officer after rumours had reached them that the battalion would be transferred to Mesopotamia.[69] Basra, in present-day Iraq, was the scene of a mutiny by soldiers of the 15th Lancers in February 1916, who "refused to fight fellow Muslims (Ottomans) in the Holy Land of Islam, although they were prepared to fight them anywhere else".[70] Such events were disquieting, but there was only once and in one location that the British position in Asia was really threatened. The scene was not in British India, but Singapore.

In Singapore (as elsewhere in Malaya) the British were in a precarious situation. Not expecting any enemy activity, the city was practically without European military defence.[71] Many Europeans eligible for military service, including those employed in the police, had left to fight in Europe. For that same reason, the number of British soldiers stationed in Singapore had been sharply decreased. Malay and Sikh police officers were made responsible for keeping law and order.[72] In 1915, it was observed that "Singapore, together with the neighbouring States enjoyed a widespread and unenviable notoriety as being a focus for Indian seditionists passing to and from the Far East and America," and that Singapore was "also well known to harbour many rank

seditionists of Indian nationality amongst its residents".[73] The city also served as a "depository" for seditious literature.[74]

On 15 February 1915, mutinous Indian soldiers and officers of the 5th Light Infantry Battalion (mostly from the Punjab and Rajasthan), and members of the Malay States Guides Mule Battery rebelled. They killed thirty-four of their officers and other British nationals.[75] The troops were recent arrivals. The 5th Light Infantry had been transferred from Assam to Singapore in April 1914. On 23 January, the battalion had been ordered to guard the Tanglin Barracks to replace the soldiers of the Malay States Guides.[76]

At the outbreak of the war, their British commanding officer had a translation made of the official British statement in which the reasons that war with the Ottomans had broken out were explained. This had reached him as a notice in the *Gazette of India*. In private talks, British officers also had tried to convince their Indian fellow officers that "the English Government had for centuries been a special friend of the Ottomans and of Islam", that German instigation was to be blamed, and that the war "was in no sense a religious war".[77] The impact seems to have been minimal. The battalion must have been composed of deeply religious soldiers and officers. On the advice of an Indian officer, the commander of the battalion had discharged one of them because "he was not orthodox in his religion, and therefore the other people did not like him" (the man in question himself also wanted to leave).[78] Consequently, anti-British propaganda had had a greater effect. As one scholar wrote, the soldiers "were fully converted to the doctrine of the Ghadr propaganda".[79] Propaganda and rumours had even succeeded in convincing some Indian soldiers that the interned Germans were Muslims. Ridout claimed that the German prisoners (who had already almost completed an escape tunnel) had deliberately created this impression. They had been "in the habit of saying prayers at sundown in Mahommedan fashion and pretended to recite the Koran".[80] Apart from the clearly pro-Ottoman feelings of its soldiers, what Young called "the influence of pessimists, alarmists, rumour mongers, and preachers of fanaticism" had also stirred the brew.[81] In the British assessments of the preachers of fanaticism in the 5th Light Infantry, Kasim Ismail Mansur again figured prominently.[82]

A focal place of dissension, where the Indian Muslim soldiers and officers, and other Muslims could hear anti-British sermons, or could participate in seditious discussions, was the Kampong Jawa Mosque. It was the residence of what was described as "a well known and most dangerous character, a *Pir* or holy man", named Nur Alam Shah.[83] He prayed for the victory of Islam and

impressed upon his audience that the end of British rule in Singapore was nigh, and that German ships would come to assist the soldiers after they had struck the first blow for rebellion.[84] A British secret agent, sent from India to Singapore after the refusal of the Malay States Guides to fight in East Africa, described Nur Alam Shah as "a very seditious and fanatical man".[85] He also identified Subedar Muhamed Zaman as one of Nur Alam Shah's *murid*, who gave him "large presents of money", an indication that an Islamic mystical brotherhood was involved.[86]

Another hotbed of sedition in Singapore had been the regimental mosque. There on the Friday before the mutiny, one of the Indian soldiers, Manowar Ali, had urged the congregation to "pray for the advancement of Islam and the victory of the forces of Islam", and had asked "a blessing for the success of the armies of the faithful".[87] The position that the *maulvi*, the regimental preacher, had taken in this respect is not clear. Afterwards some testified that he was loyal to the British, but reports did circulate among the soldiers that he had spoken out against fighting Muslim Ottoman troops.[88]

There had been other places, as in Singapore, where anti-British propaganda was spread. British officers had been well aware that soldiers and agitators could easily meet at the Docks "where sedition-mongers from America and other places" passed through.[89] They also knew that some "undesirable" Indian civilians, living opposite the entrance to the Alexandra Barracks occupied by the 5th Light Infantry and the Mule Battery, tried to influence the troops, and consequently, had them removed.[90] Sentiments had also been influenced by "talk with people in the Bazaar".[91] Furthermore, German propaganda was blamed. The chairman of the Court of Enquiry into the mutiny, Evelyn C. Ellis, concluded that "German influences had been at work amongst the men of the 5th Light Infantry, as they have been throughout the whole of the Far East, including India, with the object of stirring up dissension and alienating our native subjects from their true allegiance to His Majesty the KING…"[92]

Discontent had been brewing for some time. There were various reasons, but war was indubitably one. After the Ottomans had entered the war, the Indian soldiers had eschewed any informal contact with British officers. In December 1914, most Indian Non-Commissioned Officers had refused to visit the British officers and "to make their salaams" as was customary at Christmas.[93] Such a gesture can be seen as an indication of growing anti-British sentiment as well as of a manifestation of a stricter interpretation of Islam. The second point may have escaped the British, the first could not. Consequently, the British commander had been well aware of the disposition among the Indian soldiers.

Events came to a head when the 5th Light Infantry received orders to be ready to be transported overseas. They were to be transferred to Hong Kong on the 18th. Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State for War, had considered the Indian soldiers "too Mohamedan for service in Egypt".[94] Some of the soldiers doubted that Hong Kong was the real destination and feared that they would have to fight Turkish troops in the Middle East. Some of those who were not prepared to pursue battle against Turkish soldiers did not object to taking on Germans in Europe, but others, afraid that they would indeed be sent to Europe, were certain that in Belgium or France he "who does not fall in battle will die from the cold".[95]

It took three days to put down the mutiny and accompanying riots, and this could only be accomplished with the help of marines from Russian, French, and Japanese warships. The Sultan of Johore also made a contribution with his own personal army.[96] Revenge was, as one author called it, "draconian".[97] Over forty of the mutineers were sentenced to death and executed. Significantly, just before his execution, one of the Indian non-commissioned officers protested that he was a German soldier, not a British one. At least one other soldier considered the Kaiser to be his sovereign.[98] Soldiers of the 5th Light Infantry who had remained loyal were sent to the front. In September, Young could mention that the Malay States Guides had renewed their offer and were "proceeding gladly on active service".[99] Brigadier General Ridout received a medal for crushing the mutiny.

The Muslim elite of the city then hastened to testify their loyalty. On the initiative of Sayyid Umar and another Arab resident, Sayyid Muhamad Aqil, meetings were organized to explain the British action to the Muslim population. On 6 March, the drive culminated in "one of the largest meetings ever known in Singapore", held in Victoria Hall and attended by almost three thousand people. Representatives of the various communities expressed their loyalty to British rule.[100] Muslims vowed that the "Loyalty and Fealty of the Mohammedans of Singapore has in no whit altered from what it was before the war".[101] In view of what were probably their real sentiments, it was a rather ambiguous statement.

THE GREAT WAR AND ISLAM

The Ottoman Empire's joining the Great War of 1914–18 and the proclamation of a holy war by the Sultan transformed Islam into a key propaganda tool in undermining the rule of Great Britain, France, and Russia over their Muslim subjects. The British campaign to circulate statements by Indian Muslim leaders denouncing Ottoman involvement with the war was futile. Religion became an

even more central issue when Germany gave support to plans of Indians living in exile in the United States and Europe to instigate an uprising in British India. One of the consequences of the second scheme was that Indian agitators played an important role in fomenting discontent with colonial rule in Southeast Asia. Agitation and propaganda centred on strengthening nationalist sentiments and stressing the obligation of Muslims to resist alien rule. There were plenty of calls to kill Christians. It was in the nature of the goals set that the political aspects were given priority. Muslim identity was stressed, but more research is needed to find out how this was reflected in the religious sphere proper. It may well be that World War I was one of the periods in which a religious revival took place, momentarily reversing the trend which had set in around the turn of the century, which saw part of the Islamic community adopting aspects of Western culture. In the Netherlands Indies, such a tendency was already conspicuous before the war. In May 1913, D.A. Rinkes (the Dutch colonial Advisor for Native Affairs) observed that the desire to imitate Western manners was no longer as pronounced as it had been, and that in dress, ways of greeting, and also in diet, Muslim customs were more widely followed.[102] The World War may have reinforced this. As Muslims could not fail to notice, what happened on the fronts was hardly an example of how civilized nations were supposed to act, and contradicted the image the colonizing powers had presented of themselves to justify the expansion of their rule in regions not yet under their control.

Notes

1. Snouck Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islam, 2nd enlarged edition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1915), p. 121.
2. A concept promoted equally by the Ottoman Empire and vehemently contested by European states
3. *De Expres*, 3 February 1914.
4. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore (1915), in T.R. Sareen, *Secret Documents on Singapore Mutiny* (New Delhi: Mounto Publishing House, 1995), p. 496.
5. Report Schrieke, 30 April 1917 (National Archief [NA] Ministerie van Koloniën [MvK] Verbaal [V] 14 February 1918-34).
6. *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the Year 1915* (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1916), p. C 169.
7. Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 79.
8. Ibid, p. 122.
9. This was according to a British translation of a text originally in Urdu. Ibid., pp. 730–31.

10. Hardinge to Nicholson, 9 July 1915 (Public Record Office [PRO] Foreign Office [FO] 800 378).
11. P. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire* (New York, Tokyo and London: Kodansha International, 1994), pp. 23–24.
12. Van der Staal Piershil to De Beaufort, 23 October 1898, Von Weckerlin to De Beaufort 23 December 1900 (NA *Politieke gezantschapsrapporten Constantinople*).
13. The task of modernizing the Turkish Navy fell to the British, but proved no success. One British advisor, Rear-Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble, lacked the tact to get along with Ottoman naval officers, and, after being transferred to an office function ashore, went on prolonged leave. His successor, Admiral Sir Arthur Henry Limpus, was soon to complain that the Undersecretary of the Turkish Admiralty was a fervent Germanophile (Lowther to Grey, 25 September 1911, 28 November 1911; PRO FO 800 80).
14. See, for example, Snouck Hurgronje to Rooseboom 19 December 1901 (NA Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken [MvBu] A-dos. 190 box 450).
15. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, pp. 18–19.
16. D. Smurthwaite, "The Indian Army in the Era of Two World Wars", *Soldiers of the Raj: The Indian Army 1600–1947*, edited by A.J. Guy and P.B. Boyden (National Army Museum, 1997), p. 166.
17. Hardinge to Nicholson, 1 February 1915 (PRO FO 800 377).
18. Smurthwaite, "Indian Army", p. 165.
19. Robert D, Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge etc.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 351–52, 362; see also Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, pp. 230–35.
20. Snouck Hurgronje to Loudon, 25 January 1915, 23 July 1915 (Gobée & Adriaanse 1957–65 II: 1687–88, 1690–97).
21. Snouck Hurgronje to Pleyte, 23 July 1915, 22 October 1915 (NA MvK V 6 August 1915-B11, 2 March 1915-L3).
22. Snouck Hurgronje to Pleyte, 2 March 1916 (NA MvK V 2-3-1916-L3).
23. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, p. 351.
24. Arkib Negara Malaysia High Commissioner's Office (ANM HCO) 1723/14.
25. Notification issued by the Government of India indicating the policy of His Majesty's Government in respect of the Holy Places (ANM Secretary of State [SoS] 37/1915).
26. German propaganda did its best to create the impression that the many statements in favour of Great Britain had been forced on the Indian rulers by the British. The Begum of Bhopal, it was stated, had intended to travel to Istanbul to inform the Sultan about the true sympathies of her subjects, but the British had abducted her son. The Aga Khan was reported to have been forced to board a ship to Europe, and that his friends had forcibly tried to prevent this (*Lokal Anzeiger*, cited in *De Locomotief*, 22 December 1914).
27. ANM HCO 1723/14.

28. Secretary to the High Commissioner to the Colonial Secretary of Colombo, 14 January 1915 (ANM HCO 59/1915).
29. Telegram of Viceroy of India to Secretary of State (ANM SoS 37/1915).
30. Secretary to the High Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India, 14 January 1915 (ANM HCO 59/1915).
31. Proclamation, 5 November 1914 (ANM HCO 1806*a*/1914).
32. The reason for this was that he had become angry because in the listing of names of the four rulers in the preamble he was mentioned third. The order had been determined, as was the custom, by the date the states had came under British protection, but he concluded that the Sultan of Perak, whose name came first, had been put in a position of superiority over him. (Undersecretary Federated Malay States to Secretary to the High Commissioner, 25 November 1914; ANM HCO 1806*a*/1914).
33. Proclamation Sultan of Pahang (ANM HCO 1806*a*/1914).
34. British Adviser, Kelantan, 10 August 1914, 10 November 1914 (ANM HCO Kel. 1281/14, 1729/14, Johor 1803/14, Sel 1805*a*/14, Treng 1941/14, Ch Sec 1806*a*/14, H.C. 1702/14), *Oetoesan Hindia*, 20 August 1914.
35. Othman (2002), p. 40. See also Report from Brigadier General Ridout General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with remarks on proceedings of court of enquiry, Sareen, 1995, pp. 688–707.
36. *De Locomotief*, 9 November 1914, 13 November 1914, 16 November 1914.
37. *Oetoesan-Hindia*, 5 November 1914, 10 November 1914, 16 November 1914.
38. Note Schrieke, 30 April 1917 (NA CO V 14 February 1918-38).
39. *De Locomotief,* 3 December 1914.
40. *Oetoesan-Hindia*, 14 November 1914.
41. Bertie to Grey, 17 September 1914, 1 December 1914 (PRO FO 800 56*b*).
42. It was also intended to have Muslim (and Hindu) prisoners of war re-enter the war as soldiers in the German army. Of some 4,000 prisoners about 800 did enlist in the German army. The camp also had a magazine, *Al-Jihad*, published in Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi. An edition in Tartar was contemplated (Gerhard Kaiser, *Sperrgebiet. Die geheimen Kommandozentralen in Wünsdorf seit 1871* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1993), p. 47).
43. Ibid., pp. 46–48. See also *Alltag im Geheimen. Aus der Militärgeschichte der Region Zossen-Wünsdorf-Rehagen/Klausdorf-Sperenberg-Kummersdorf — 1872 bis 1945*– (Wünsdorf: Militärhistorischer Verein Zossen-Wünsdorf e. V. 1996), p. 10.
44. *De Locomotief,* 11 January 1916.
45. "Au people allemande", 1 September 1914, Rifat to Bethman Hollweg, 17 September 1914 (*De Indiër* Vol. 1, no 50/51, pp. 233–34*).*
46. *Oetoesan-Hindia*, 5 November 1914, 10 November 1914, 16 November 1914.
47. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire,* p. 105.

48. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1915, pp. B 47-8.
49. See William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).
50. See also Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 9.
51. Ibid., pp. 10–11.
52. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, pp. 97, 179.
53. *Memorandum Becket*, 5 January 1915 (NA MvK V, 26 November 1915).
54. *Note Department A1*, 15 December 1916 (NA MvK V, 18 December 1916 Z16).
55. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, p. 97.
56. *San Francisco Examiner*, 10 July 1917.
57. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, p. 2.
58. Ibid, pp. 60–61.
59. *Soerabaisch Handelsblad,* 9 March 1916, cited in *De Indische Gids*, 1916, p. 786.
60. A much smaller number were also published in French: *La fidélité de l'Inde envers l'Angleterre.* Head PTT to Uhlenbeck, 30 March 1916 (NA MvK V, 27 June 1916-4).
61. A famous Indo-European nationalist, Ernest François Eugène Douwes Dekker, who himself became deeply involved in the Indo-German conspiracy, had provided Kraft with a letter of introduction to one of his friend in Java. Before the war Douwes Dekker had struck up a friendship with a number of key Indian revolutionary exiles during a tour through Europe. In 1913 he had been banned from the Netherlands Indies.
62. Rinkes to Idenburg, 29 July 1915 (NA MvK V, 4 October 1915-24).
63. In the end Abdul Selam was exiled to the island of Timor.
64. Report conversation with Beckett on 19 April 1917 (NA MvK V, 11 December 1917-A14).
65. See Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*, pp. 62, 85–86.
66. See Nadzan Haron, "Colonial Defence and British Approach to the Problems in Malaya, 1874–1918", *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 2 (1990): 285.
67. J. Lauterbach, *1000 £ belooning dood of levend. Avontuurlijke vlucht door de Hollandsche koloniën van den voormaligen prijsofficier van de "Emden" Julius Lauterbach kapitein-luitenant der reserve* (Amsterdam en Rotterdam: C.L. van Langenhuysen, 1918), p. 20.
68. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1915, pp. C 169. and Sareen, *Secret Documents on Singapore Mutiny*, pp. 11, 39.
69. S.L. Menezes, "Race, Caste, Mutiny and Discipline in the Indian Army from its Origins to 1947", in *Soldiers of the Raj*, edited by A.J.Guy and P.B. Boyden, pp. 110, 115–16.
70. Ibid. p. 117.

71. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1914 (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1915), pp. B 75–76.
72. The other side of the coin was that almost certainly there were more "fanatics" in the city than the few Young, who initially seemed as unaware of actual sentiments as Ridout had been, had spoken of in his speech in the Legislative Council; letter from the Governor of the Straits Settlements to the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding Court of Inquiry and causes of mutiny (Sareen 1995, p. 710).
73. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore, p. 39.
74. Report from Brigadier General Ridout General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with remarks on proceedings of court of enquiry, Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 698.
75. The uprising coincided with a Ghadr-inspired plot by Sikhs returning home at the outbreak of the war to ignite a rebellion by Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu soldiers in the Indian Army in February 1915, and in imitation of the 1857 Mutiny march on Delhi (Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire,* pp. 66–71, 81; Sareen, *Secret Documents*, pp. 7, 10).
76. Early February, the Indian sentries of the Tanglin Barracks were replaced by Malay soldiers from Johor. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry in Singapore, pp. 561–62.
77. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry in Singapore, p. 579.
78. Sareen, *Secret Documents*, pp. 601, 607.
79. Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 1.
80. Report 1915, p. 432, Report from Brigadier General Ridout General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with remarks on proceedings of court of enquiry *Secret Documents*, p. 699.
81. Proceedings 1916, pp. C 170.
82. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry in Singapore, p. 39.
83. Ibid., pp. 40, 290.
84. Ibid., p. 617.
85. Ibid., p. 616.
86. Ibid., p. 616.
87. Ibid., p. 70.
88. Ibid., pp. 325, 383, 588.
89. Ibid., p. 578.
90. Report from Brigadier General Ridout General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with remarks on proceedings of court of enquiry, Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 698.
91. Letter from the Governor of the Straits Settlements to the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding Court of Inquiry and causes of mutiny, Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 710.

92. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1915, pp. B 47–48.
93. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore, pp. 58, 621.
94. Report from Brigadier General Ridout General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with remarks on proceedings of court of enquiry, Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 691.
95. Another rumour insisted that Great Britain would soon be defeated and that because Indian soldiers would no longer be of any use to the British, the latter would sink the ship on which they were to be transported to Hong Kong (Sareen, *Secret Documents*, pp. 79, 332). Others thought that they would be sent to Europe, as Nur Alam Shah had suggested to them. Soldiers also grumbled that Great Britain was losing the war in Europe and that they were not prepared to die there for the pittance they received and that the allowance their widows would receive was not enough for them to stay alive (Sareen, *Secret Documents*, pp. 544, 553, 617). In any case, from letters home suggesting to those at home not to enlist, it becomes clear that the soldiers were aware that the Great War was not a good time to be in the army, (See letters in Sareen, *Secret Documents*, pp. 718–31). Also see Lauterbach, *1000 £ belooning dood of levend*, p. 20, report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry in Singapore (1915) Sareen, *Secret Documents*, p. 383.
96. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1915, pp. C 170.
97. A.J. Stockwell, "The War and the British Empire", in *Britain and the First World War*, edited by J. Turner (London: Unwin Hayman, 1988), p. 46.
98. Report in connection with the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry in Singapore, pp. 542, 580.
99. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements for the year 1915, pp. C 170.
100. Ibid., pp. C 170.
101. Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalies of the Arabs in Malaya before World War II", *Transcending Borders*. *Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), p. 39.
102. *Adviezen van den adviseur voor inlandsche zaken betreffende de vereeniging "Sarekat Islam"* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1913), p. 35.

7

THE AHMADIYYA PRINT JIHAD IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Iqbal Singh Sevea

On 13 July 1925, over two thousand people gathered at the Victoria Memorial Hall in Singapore to protest against the influx of Ahmadiyya influences into Malaya. The protestors asserted that under no circumstances should Muslims possess any books published by the Ahmadiyya, and called on the government to enforce a ban on the admission of Ahmadiyya literature into Malaya. The Ahmadiyya responded to this call for the curtailment of their publications by arguing that the protestors had failed to realize the important role played by their publications in propagating the message of "true" Islam to the far corners of the world.[1] Indeed, the Ahmadiyya were among the earliest Muslim groups to realize the utility of print media both to respond to criticisms levelled against Islam, and to transmit Islam globally. It was in the light of this that H.A.R. Gibb in his 1932 survey of modern Muslim movements credited the development of the modern Muslim apologetic to this group.[2] Apart from winning adherents to their association (*jama'at*), their effective use of the print media enabled the Ahmadiyya to play an important role in shaping modern Muslim thought in early twentieth-century Southeast Asia. Their tracts, journals, and books proved to be important models for a host of modern publications by Islamic organizations such as the Muhamadiyyah and Sarekat Islam.

This chapter examines the centrality of publishing to the emergence of the Ahmadiyya movement and its expansion beyond South Asia, particularly to Southeast Asia. More broadly, it seeks to provide insights into the impact

of print technology on religious life, as well as to the transmission of Islamic concepts and the development of new Muslim organizations. In contrast to Benedict Anderson's assertion that the rise of print ushered in a shift in literary and mass consciousness from a religiously based culture to secularized discourses,[3] the proliferation of religious journals and tracts during the period studied in this chapter clearly demonstrates the ability of religious communities to adopt modern communications technologies. These technological changes, however, did usher in wide-ranging changes in religious discourse and conceptions of authority.[4]

The Ahmadiyya provides an interesting case study into the impact of print on religion because from its very inception, it set out to transmit its message globally and strove to develop physical as well as textual links with places as far removed as America, China, Ghana, and Indonesia. Print was clearly the medium of choice for the transmission of what they perceived to be the true message of Islam. In stark contrast to the Tablighi Jama'at, a near contemporaneous South Asian Islamic revivalist movement that prizes the oral tradition over the written and looks to personal communication as the medium for religious revival,[5] the Ahmadiyya seem almost to have negated the need for personal individual contact through the use of modern means of communication. The Ahmadiyya have established printing presses at all of their major centres, be they in Qadian, Rabwah, Woking, or Southfields. It has been said that the corpus of literature produced by the movement makes the Ahmadiyya the best documented religious movement in modern Islam.[6] I would further argue that the very emergence and development of the movement has also been inextricably linked with processes which are characteristic of print revolutions, including the fragmentation of religious authority and the development of transnational linkages. In fact, the movement was so thoroughly influenced by the transforming effects of print that it self consciously re-interpreted the Islamic idea of *jihad* in terms of a "textual struggle".

The expansion in print technology facilitated the emergence of what has been described by Armando Salvatore as a "public Islam" and a concomitant fragmentation of religious authority. Public Islam essentially describes an Islam contested in the public arena through the mass media.[7] The emergence of this public Islam was inherently linked to the rise of new interpreters of Islam who were not necessarily trained in the traditional Islamic sciences, but were able to use the print media to challenge the monopoly of the traditional religious authorities, namely the *ulama* and Sufis, to interpret the sources of Islam.[8] Understanding the impact of print on Islam then must take into account the contestations over religious authority that occurred in the public arena.

The sheer number of printing presses established in nineteenth-century India and the volume of material published suggest that the print media was more extensively employed by the Muslims of South Asia than almost anywhere else.[9] Far from seeing themselves as being on the periphery of the *umma*, a number of Muslim intellectuals in South Asia felt that they were uniquely placed to provide intellectual leadership and guidance to the Muslims of the world on a host of legal, socio-political, and religious issues. The prevalence of established core-periphery approaches in the academic study of Islam has limited South Asia to the fringe of the Islamic world as a mere recipient of influences. This has detracted from an appreciation of the contribution of the South Asian Muslim intelligentsia to the evolution of Islam and to Muslim societies beyond the subcontinent. Many of the works published in South Asia were widely translated and circulated in Southeast Asia. For example, while there has been a growing interest, post-September 11, in tracing nefarious connections between individuals in Southeast Asia and *madrasas* (schools, seminaries, or educational institutions) in Afghanistan and Pakistan, broader and more representative patterns in the development of Muslim networks and the exchange of texts and ideas between South and Southeast Asia are still understudied.

While channels for the distribution of Islamic texts had linked South and Southeast Asia for centuries, the rapid expansion of print accelerated, intensified, and multiplied such connections. It also expanded the reach and activities of Muslim writers to other areas of Asia previously not connected with those networks. The expansiveness of the print arena in the early twentieth century is strikingly illustrated by the case of Maulana Muhammad Barkatullah, a professor of Indian origin at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, and his associate Hasan Hatano, a Japanese convert to Islam. Fearing British censorship against their "seditious" writings, Maulana Barkatullah and Hatano published their works, including the journal *El-Islam* and the tract "*Proclamation of Liberty*", in Tokyo and used Singapore as a base to smuggle their publications into India.[10]

Nevertheless, while acknowledging the activation of such far-flung networks one should simply not conflate any such transregional connections with the idea of "pan-Islam" as it developed in the late nineteenth century. In fact, a number of prominent "globalizing" intellectuals of that period were opposed to the very use of the term, pan-Islam, to describe their views. "Pan-Islam" was seen by some as an Orientalist invention that conjured up images of an Islamic world united against the West and Western civilization. It also served, they believed, to dismiss valid political reactions to colonial policies as mere assertions of religious fanaticism. In a speech made in response to a

lecture by D.S. Margoliouth on "Pan-Islamism", the modern Indian intellectual Ameer Ali (1849–1928) argued that the idea of "Pan-Islamism is a figment of the [Western] brain, an invention designed to help in destroying the liberty of Mussulman nations".[11] Instead of simply assuming the existence of a "pan-Islamic" consciousness, it is important to understand the ways in which print media facilitated the transmission of a wide range of Islamic religious and social ideals, and the development of diverse Muslim communities.

THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY: EMERGENCE AND EXPANSION

The Ahmadiyya are the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) of Qadian, Punjab, who proclaimed himself as the renewer of Islam in the nineteenth century. Ghulam Ahmad did not receive a traditional Islamic education in *madrasas*, but rather was educated at home by private tutors. He later took up work in the colonial law courts of Sialkot. He first announced his claim to leadership of the Muslim community in his *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya* [*Proofs and Ahmadiyya*], published in 1882. The formal foundations for the Ahmadiyya as a distinct religious community were laid in 1888 when Ghulam Ahmad published an *isthihar* (literally, "advertisement") declaring himself as the renewer of the age and called upon Muslims to offer him *ba'ya* or allegiance.[12] It is significant to note for the purposes of this chapter that Ghulam Ahmad used the newspaper as a medium to call for people to offer him *ba'ya*. This *isthihar* was followed shortly later by a formal initiation ceremony held in Ludhiana. At a gathering (*jalsa*) on 27 December 1891, Ghulam Ahmad announced that the movement will hold annual gatherings in Qadian with the declared objective of enabling followers to increase their religious knowledge, strengthen their fraternal bonds with each other, and chart plans for missionary activities overseas.[13]

In 1914, the movement split into two factions, one based in Qadian and the other in Lahore. This split stemmed from differing interpretations of the founder's claim to leadership.[14] The Qadian group subscribed to the view that Ghulam Ahmad was a continuation in the line of the prophets. The Lahore faction, on the other hand, rejected this view and argued that Ghulam Ahmad was a *mujtahid*, renewer of the age, and not a *mahdi* or a prophet. This split was institutionalized after the publication of an article by the Qadian faction in their journal *al-Fazl* (Virtue) calling for the social boycott of those who did not pledge allegiance to Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Hasan (1889–1965), the second *khalifat al-masih* (Successor of the Messiah) of the Qadian faction.[15] After the split, the group based in Qadian formally called

itself the Jamaat-i Ahmadiyya, while the Lahore faction officially named itself the Anjuman Ishaat-i Islam. The Jamaat-i Ahmadiyya officially claims to have more than 200 million adherents in over 180 countries.[16] For the purposes of this chapter, the term Ahmadiyya is used to refer to both factions. Any reference to theological or organizational detail specific to a particular faction will be identified when relevant to the discussions that follow.

Both the Lahore and Qadian factions established themselves in Southeast Asia. Indonesia proved to be a particularly important base of their activities. In fact, the Qadian branch considered Sumatra and Java to be amongst their most successful foreign missions.[17] It is estimated that there are 542 branches of the movement scattered over various Indonesian islands, 289 mosques, and 110 preaching centres.[18] The institutional presence of the Lahore faction in Indonesia can be traced to the arrival of Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig and Maulana Ahmad in 1924.[19] The institutional presence of the Qadian branch is dated to the arrival of Maulvi Rehmat Ali in Sumatra in 1925.[20] Ahmadiyya sources, however, reveal that at least a dozen students from Indonesia were already studying at their Theological College in Qadian prior to the setting up of Ahmadiyya bases in the Indonesian Archipelago.[21] It can be surmised that initial contacts with Ahmadiyya teachings were established through the circulation of texts. Journals such as the English language *Muslim India and Islamic Review*, and a number of Ahmadiyya books published in India and England, had been widely circulated in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia by the 1920s. As will be noted below, both factions also established journals in a number of Southeast Asian languages. These links were further augmented by the arrival of the leader of the Lahore branch, Kamal-ud-Din, who made a two-month-long tour of Malaya, Java, and Rangoon in 1921.[22]

As both factions developed their own organizational tools, they set up their own channels of communication and bodies through which they vigorously circulated texts and sent out missionaries. For various financial, organizational and theological reasons, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this chapter, the Qadian faction proved to be more successful in gaining adherents overseas. The Anjuman-i Taraqi-i Islami (Council for the Advancement of Islam) had been established at Qadian to oversee the development of a training college for missionaries and coordinate the despatch of missionaries. It was, however, during the era of Bashiruddin Mahmood Hasan that the impetus and organizational structure for overseas missionary activity was strengthened. Mahmood Hasan, who had himself authored a number of books including *Tafsir-i Kabir* (Exegetic of the Most High), *Debache Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Prologue to an Exegesis of the Qur'an), *Remembrance of Allah*, and *Way of Seekers*, laid great emphasis on the need for missionaries to learn local languages and

actively promoted the translation of the Qur'an into various languages. In 1934, he ushered in the *Tahrik-i Jadid* or the "New Scheme", the main aims of which were to develop the movement's missionary activities through the establishment of a central fund to finance both the publication of literature for the propagation of "true" Islam, and the creation of foreign missions in various countries.[23]

While the Lahore faction did not gain as many adherents, it can be argued that by virtue of being less controversial than the Qadian faction, their writings succeeded in making a more important contribution to mainstream modern Muslim thought in Southeast Asia.[24] Their theological stance on the position of Ghulam Ahmad and the fact that they strove in their writings to emphasize the similarities between the Ahmadiyya and mainstream Muslims ensured that their writings appealed to a wider range of Muslim intellectuals and groups who did not agree with the theology of the Qadian faction.

THE AHMADIYYA "PRINT JIHAD"

The centrality of printing to Ghulam Ahmad's mission is reflected in the fact that he published more than eighty-eight books in Urdu, Arabic, and Persian, and founded a number of journals such as the Urdu weekly journal *al-Hakam* (Wisdom) in 1897 and the *al-Bard* (Cold) in 1902. The setting up of the English language journal *The Review of Religions* in 1903 marked the first concerted effort to spread his message beyond South Asia. In the absence of an institutional presence in the English speaking world, the journal was envisaged as a medium to prove "by the means of signs and reasons the truth of his claim of having been sent by God" and convey to them "the heavenly secrets and deep truths which have been discovered by him, along with a reference to the scriptures from which they have been derived".[25] Over time, the Ahmadiyya were to establish a number of other journals in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, English, and other languages. In addition to publishing tracts and journals, Ghulam Ahmad stressed the importance of utilizing the medium of the newspaper through the publishing of *isthiharat* and engaging in newspaper debates with other individuals and groups. From its very inception, the movement was to employ the print media consciously and effectively to expand both within India and beyond. Indeed, the need to disseminate Ahmadiyya teachings in print was elevated to the status of a religious duty. Not trained in the traditional Islamic sciences, Ghulam Ahmad himself employed print media to challenge the monopoly on interpretation by traditional religious scholars and develop his own position as an authority on Islam. He even referred to his newspaper articles as an extension of the

Islamic concept of *itmam al-hujjah* or the "completion of proof", which is used when the unveiling of truth by a Messenger of God in his addressees occurs to the extent that the addressees have no excuse, but stubbornness and enmity to deny it.[26]

The emergence of the Ahmadiyya movement and its extensive use of the print media must be located within the ambit of the contestations of "public Islam", and the attempts by various Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh revivalists groups to use the public media to propagate their views and attack their rivals in early twentieth century South Asia. The early development of the movement thus occurred in an environment characterized by the hardening of communal identities as a result of the policies of the colonial state,[27] and the need to respond to polemical publications produced by Christian missionary bodies in India. Within the context of the Punjab, it is particularly important to note the impact of the activities of the Arya Samaj, a Hindu revivalist group which effectively utilized the print media to disseminate their religious programme as well as critique other religious groups. Controversially, Arya Samaj publications critiqued aspects of Islam and promoted the "reconversion" of Muslims to Hinduism. Like many other modern Indian Muslim intellectuals, Ghulam Ahmad attacked the traditional religious authorities for failing to meet the criticisms levelled against Islam by the missionaries and groups such as the Arya Samaj. By publishing articles, tracts, and books, he was not only able to engage members of the Arya Samaj and Christian missionaries in theological debates, but also to respond to their critiques of Islam. This was reflected clearly in *The Review of Religions* where it was stated that one of the aims of the journal was to "defend Islam, the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet and the Prophet of this Age and answer all kinds of objections levelled against any of these".[28]

One of the most common charges levelled against Islam by outside critics in these modern polemics was that it promoted violent struggle. A number of Ghulam Ahmad's contemporaries such as Ameer Ali and Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956) set about to address this charge in different ways and to expound on what they felt was the true nature of the Islamic concept of *jihad* (struggle).[29] Ghulam Ahmad himself spoke in terms of a *qalam ka jihad* or a *jihad* of the pen. Ghulam Ahmad argued that both the *ulama* and Western scholars had erroneously interpreted *jihad* solely in terms of armed struggle.[30] There were essentially two strands in his ideas on *jihad*. Firstly, civilization had reached a stage where battles were not to be fought by swords, but rather with words.[31] This point is best illustrated in a quote from *The Review of Religions*:

> ours is the age of publicity and propaganda and now Islam will come to its own not through military conquests but by conquering the hearts and minds of men, with its beautiful teachings. To always think in the terms of physical conquests may be the philosophy of the erratic German political thinker — Nietzsche. It is not that of Islam. Islam's greatest need and opportunity lies in the diffusion and dissemination of its message which possesses a far greater striking power than any sword, gun or bomb.[32]

Ghulam Ahmad argued that it was stipulated in the Qur'an that Muslims were only to react in accordance with the threat they were confronted with. In modern times, Muslims and Islam were being threatened by religious polemics in the shape of anti-Islamic books, articles, and tracts. Hence, the present need was for Muslims to publish. In one of his *isthihars* to a newspaper, Ghulam Ahmad wrote,

> There is peace and freedom from every direction. Today the threats to Islam are from the method of the pen. This is why it is important that a response be given with the method of the pen. Allah has stated in the Qur'an that one should make the same preparations as one's enemy is making against you. Study the kind of preparations that the enemies of Islam are making today. It is not that they are gathering armies. Rather, they are publishing many different kinds of books and tracts.[33]

Such was the urgent need for the *qalam ka jihad* that Ghulam Ahmad stated that it was permissible for Muslims to use *sood* (interest earned from money saved in banks) to fund the setting up of presses and production of publications. He hastened to clarify that he was not challenging the view that *sood* was not declared by God to be *haram* (unlawful). He was merely stating that Islam had provisions for the use of *sood* in the case of a *jihad* upon which life and death were dependent as was the case today.[34] It is worth noting that Ghulam Ahmad was opposed to the view that the *mahdi*'s role was to raise the sword against the enemies of Islam, this he argued had been a false interpretation of the role of the *mahdi*.[35] His writings indicate that he believed that the role of the *mahdi*, or the role he envisaged for himself, was to propagate Islam through speech (*zuban*) and the pen (*qalam*).

Supporters of the movement claim that Ghulam Ahmad did not abrogate the older tradition of *jihad* but returned it to its truer and wider significance. Throughout the publications of both factions of the Ahmadiyya movement, it is stressed that Ghulam Ahmad's correcting of the "false" portrayals of *jihad* was one of his greatest contributions to modern Islamic thought.[36] Ghulam Ahmad had himself repeatedly stressed that Muhammad's *jihad* had

taken the form of the propagation of Islam and that Muhammad had for a long period of time resisted raising arms even in the face of severe physical threat. He also equated his interpretation of *jihad* with the days of Moses.[37] Such an exposition of *jihad* did not go unchallenged. Ghulam Ahmad was accused of weakening the spirit of the Muslims to confront their position of disempowerment and for attempting to reconcile them to the position of colonial subjugation.[38] More disturbingly, he has also been accused of being part of a British and Jewish conspiracy to weaken Muslims by destroying their concept of *jihad*.[39]

The Ahmadiyya print *jihad* was motivated by the need to respond to anti-Islamic polemics and to disseminate what they felt was the message of "true" Islam. The print *jihad* was essentially an extension of the *munazara* or public debates that occurred between missionaries and Muslims throughout the nineteenth century.[40] Ghulam Ahmad who had himself been an active participant in these *munazara* was one of the first to extend these oral disputations to the realm of print. The journal *al-Hakam* was envisaged by him as a means of continuing these *munazara*. An *isthiharat* of Ghulam Ahmad's with regards to a proposed public debate between himself and Pandit Kharak Singh of the Arya Samaj, provides insights into the new modalities he sought to introduce to expand the *munazara* tradition into the new wider public arena. He emphasized that participants should publish and circulate a tract on the points of contention before the debate and that a report of the debate should be published in the newspapers.[41]

The print *jihad* was also to be carried out by the Ahmadiyya against other "inauthentic" presentations of Islam. Hence, the Ahmadiyya publication *al-Hamza* initiated and extended print debates with missionaries as well as Muslim figures such as Muhammad Husayn Batalvi, an adherent of the ahl-i Hadith and editor of the journal *Isha'at-us-Sunnah*. Muhammad Husayn Batalvi and Ghulam Ahmad carried out a long-drawn public debate through their respective journals, each accusing the other of "false Islam".

It is important to note that in his *al-Hakam*, Ghulam Ahmad called on Muslims not to look to the government to ban anti-Islamic polemics, but to involve themselves in disputing these works through the publication of tracts. They had to, in his words, become "Muslim religious controversialists".[42] In his view, the exposition of "true" Islam lay in the response to such writings by figures knowledgeable on Islam.[43] This was particularly demonstrated in the wake of the controversy over the publication of the *Ummahat al-Muminin* (Wives of the Prophet) by a Christian missionary. Ghulam Ahmad resisted a memorandum by the Anjumman-i Himayyat-i Islam calling on the government to ban the tract. He argued that this reflected a position of weakness and

that the need of the hour was for Muslims to contest such writings in the public arena.[44]

It has been suggested that the Ahmadiyya negation of the concept of *jihad* has resulted in them occupying an extreme position in the spectrum of Muslim thought on the relation between *jihad* and *da'wa* or proselytization.[45] While acknowledging their rejection of violent *jihad*, such a view fails to grapple with the Ahmadiyya recasting of *jihad* into a polemic or "textual struggle", and the propagation of Islam via the modern media. This chapter argues on the other hand, that for the Ahmadiyya, *jihad* was precisely the process through which *da'wa* was carried out.

PRINT AND THE TRANSMISSION OF AHMADIYYA TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Ahmadiyya set out to challenge Christian missionary activities and contest varying interpretations of Islam not only within India, but also well beyond the boundaries of South Asia. The Lahore faction's journals provide an interesting account of the arrival of Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig and Maulana Ahmad, their first missionaries in Java. They were reportedly on their way to China when they stopped over in Singapore. Here, they heard that Christian missionaries were making headway in Indonesia through their publications and missionary activities. The two are said to have set off immediately for Java to confront the missionaries.[46] It is worth noting that the Ahmadiyya were keen in drawing from the experience of Christian missionaries in establishing printing presses and circulating their publications. To this effect, the Ahmadiyya not only modelled their own journals on those published by Christian missionaries, but also looked to missionary accounts and histories to tap on their knowledge on how best to manage presses and develop networks for the transmission of religious knowledge.[47]

These networks of transmitting printed texts played a central role in the development of the Ahmadiyya in Southeast Asia. Not only were journals and texts published in India and England widely circulated in the region, but both factions of the movement also published a number of journals in Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese, and Dutch. The Qadian branch, for instance, established a journal in Bahasa Indonesia known as *Sinar Islam* (Rays of Islam). The activities of the Lahore branch were concentrated largely in Java where they founded two Javanese journals, *Moeslem* and *Risalah Ahmadiyya*. Both factions also strove to translate the writings of their leaders into local languages. It has already been noted above that Bashiruddin Mahmood Hasan, leader of the Qadian faction, laid great stress on the need to translate the

Qur'an into local languages. The Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia translations of the *tafsir* (exegesis) written by the Lahore faction's leading religious figure Muhammad Ali, proved to be one of the most influential Ahmadiyya text in Southeast Asia. Agus Salim (1884–1954), an important Indonesian intellectual and statesman, celebrated the *tafsir* as an exposition of the Qur'an that was suited for the mind of the modern Muslim youth. Muhammad Ali's *tafsir*, in Salim's view, not only removed various misconceptions about Islam, but also refuted accusations made by non-Muslims against Islam. H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto (1882–1934), the first leader of the Sarekat Islam, also drew heavily from this *tafsir*. So impressed was he by the *tafsir* that he began work on translating it into Bahasa Indonesia.[48]

Given the transnational dimension of the Ahmadiyya, journals and newspapers were the key media through which their doctrine and beliefs were defined and disseminated. These publications expounded their views on a whole host of political, legal, economic, and social issues. Equally important, if not more so, was the regular publication of the weekly *khutba* (sermon delivered before the Friday prayers) of the *khalifa* by the Qadian faction in their journals. Their publications allowed the Ahmadiyya to develop and guide communities in areas where they did not have a strong institutional presence. They were able to rely on a small or weak organizational structure as long as networks for the transmission of texts remained open. One interesting example is that of the Philippines, where the Ahmadiyya claimed that despite regular attempts, they had failed to receive permission from the government to build a missionary centre. In order to spread their message, they sent in a large number of tracts and books published in the English language.[49] This demonstrates the role of the printed tract as a means of linking transnational communities and facilitating the development of transnational communities. In the absence of missionaries and personal contacts, the Ahmadiyya devised a novel method of gaining adherents, they published *ba'ya* forms for membership initiation in the journals they were sending out to the Philippines. These forms could then be signed by people intending to join the movement and sent back to Qadian. Ahmadiyya publications also ensured that the movement in Southeast Asia continued to be linked to and guided by its centres in South Asia. This is particularly the case with the Qadian faction for which the city of Rabwah in Pakistan — built by the community in the wake of the Partition of India — and London, the current abode of the Ahmadiyya leadership, continue to be the nerve centres of their activities.

The active involvement of the Ahmadiyya in the public arena did not go unchallenged. As was the case in India, a number of Muslim figures in Southeast Asia used the print media to attack the movement. The pages of

Sinar Islam reveal that the Ahmadiyya was engaged in prolonged polemics against publications such as *Pembela Islam* (Defenders of Islam), published by the reformist organization Persatuan Islam, and *Sinar Acheh* (Light of Aceh). In fact, in 1933 representatives of the Qadian faction and members of PERSIS engaged with each other in two heavily publicized debates, one in Bandung and the other in Jakarta.[50] Many of the anti-Ahmadiyya writings published in Southeast Asia themselves drew from South Asian writings against the movement. Muhammad Iqbal (1897–1932) was one such modern Indian intellectual whose English and Urdu writings rejecting the Ahmadiyya movement were not only extensively quoted by Southeast Asian opponents of the movement, but also translated and published by various Muslim organizations in the region. The Malaysian editor of the journal *Progressive Islam*, Hussein Alatas (1928–2007), was among those who drew from the work of Iqbal in developing his own critiques of the Ahmadiyya movement.[51]

The two factions of the Ahmadiyya movement themselves also debated each other through their Southeast Asian journals. The *Sinar Islam* of the Qadian faction and the Javanese language journal *Moeslim* published by the Lahore faction actively disputed each others' theological views and activities. Perhaps reacting to the claim that the Lahore faction's publications attracted a wider following amongst mainstream Muslims, the Qadian faction's journals actively sought to assert to the readership beyond South Asia that they were the "true" representatives of Ghulam Ahmad's message. They accused the Lahore faction's journals of observing a silence over matters likely to displease non-Ahmadis, or mentioning them only in a "mutilated" form.[52]

This chapter has attempted to further our developing understanding of links between South and Southeast Asian Islam by focusing on the expansion of the Ahmadiyya movement. The flow of influences and ideas between these two regions was intensified by the expansion of print technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Ahmadiyya actively employed print technology and cultivated networks of circulating publications between the two regions. Print thus facilitated the dissemination of their vision of "true Islam" and the development of a transnational Ahmadiyya community (*jama'at*) linking believers in South and Southeast Asia and beyond.

Notes

1. "A Voice from Singapore", *Review of Religion* 24, no. 10 (October 1925): 25–26.
2. H.A.R. Gibb, *Whither Islam? A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1932), p. 353.

3. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).
4. For an interesting introduction to the impact of print on religious life, see Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, new edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
5. For a comprehensive study of the Tablighi Jama'at, refer to Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi-Jama'at (1920–2000): A Cross Comparative Study* (Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 2002). For more on Tablighi connections between South and Southeast Asia, see Farish Noor's essay in this volume.
6. Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its Medieval Background* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 11.
7. Armando Salvatore, "Muslim Publics", in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, edited by Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 3–27.
8. I draw here from the work of Piscatori and Eickelman who have argued that the expansion of print allowed for the "fragmentation of religious authority" where religious interpretation was no longer limited or dependent on the trained religious elite, but open to anyone who could publish. See *Muslim Politics*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), especially pp. 40–68, 131–35.
9. See Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 66–104; and Margarit Pernau, "The *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* Between Persian Akhbarat and English Newspapers", *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003): 105–31.
10. Home Department (Political) Proceedings, February 1914, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
11. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Right Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali-Political Writings*, edited by Shan Muhammad (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1989), p. 217.
12. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 4.
13. For a more detailed history of the Ahmadiyya movement, see Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974), and Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*.
14. The two factions also disagree over the issue of the leadership of the community. While the Jamaat-i Ahmadiyya subscribes to the view that leadership lies in the hands of the Caliph who is appointed by God, the Anjuman Ishaat-i Islam subscribes to the view that leadership is vested in a selected body of people. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 16–22.
15. For a comprehensive discussion on the theological and leadership issues that led to the split, see Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 11–23.
16. This figure is drawn from a press release of 2003: <http://www.alislam.org//jalsa/uk/2003/uk-convention.pdf>, accessed 2 April 2007.
17. *The Review of Religions* 34, no. 3 (March 1935): 85.

18. <http://www.alislam.org/library/history/ahmadiyya/114.html>, accessed 18 August 2007.
19. Iskandar Zulkarnain, *Gerakan Ahmadiyah di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005), p. 180.
20. *The Review of Religions* 36, no. 10 (October 1937): 503–504.
21. *The Review of Religions* 24, no. 10 (October 1925): 6.
22. *The Islamic Review* 9, no. 4 (April 1921): 122. For details of his tour and summaries of the lectures he delivered, refer to *The Islamic Review* 9, no. 6 (June–July 1921): 202–206.
23. Chaudhary Zafarullah Khan, *Ahmadiyyat: The Renaissance of Islam* (Rabwah, 1978), pp. 272–74.
24. This has been noted by Zulkarnain in *Gerakan Ahmadiyah di Indonesia*.
25. "The Aims and Objectives of *The Review of Religions*", *The Review of Religions* 1, no. 1 (December 1924): 2–3.
26. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, 3 vols. (London: Mubarak A. Saqi, 1986), I: 1–2.
27. See, for instance, Sandra B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community*: *Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), and Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
28. *The Review of Religions* 1, no. 1 (December 1924): 2–3.
29. See, for instance, Ameer Ali, *Political Writings*, pp. 217–18; Zafar Ali Khan, "Indian Mussalmans and Pan-Islamism" dated 14 June 1913 in *Selections from Maulana Mohammad Ali's Comrade*, compiled by Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri (Nadwi) (Lahore: Mohammad Ali Academy, 1965), p. 297.
30. See, for instance, Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, IV: 367.
31. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, IV: 18.
32. "Jihad in Islam", *The Review of Religions* 35, no. 6–7 (June–July 1936): 289.
33. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, V: 21.
34. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, V: 23.
35. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, II: 330.
36. See, for example, *The Review of Religions* 36, no. 10 (October 1937): 485.
37. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, V: 22.
38. See, for example, Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, compiled by A.R. Tariq (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1973), p. 126.
39. Ehsan Elahi Zaheer, *Qadiniyat: An Analytical Survey*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Idara Tarjuman Al-Sunnah, 1973).
40. Excellent studies of the debates between Christian missionaries and the Muslim *ulama* can be found in the work of Avril Powell, "Maulana Rahmat Allah Kairanawi and Muslim Christian Controversy in India in the mid-19th Century", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1 (1976): 42–63; *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993); "Modernist Muslim Reponses to Christian Critiques of Islamic Culture, Civilisation, and History in Northern

India", in *Christians, Cultural Interactions and India's Religious Traditions*, edited by J.M. Brown and R.E. Frykenberg (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 61–91, for an interesting article on Muslim responses to critiques levelled against Islam.

41. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, I: 8.
42. Quoted in Lavan, *Ahmadiyah*, p. 72.
43. Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmuah Isthiharat*, V: 23.
44. Lavan, *Ahmadiyah*, p. 72.
45. Egdunas Racius, *The Multiple Nature of the Islamic Da'wa* (Dissertation, University of Helsinki/Faculty of Arts, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Arabic and Islamic Studies and Vilnius University, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, October 2004), p. 160.
46. This story is also narrated in Zulkarnain, *Gerakan Ahmadiyah*, pp. 180–81.
47. *The Review of Religions* 45, no. 1 (January 1945): 9–12.
48. Zulkarnain, *Gerakan Ahmadiyah*, p. 185.
49. *Sinar Islam* 8, no. 6 (June 1958): 1, 20.
50. Zulkarnain, *Gerakan Ahmadiyah*, pp. 224–25.
51. For a further discussion of Alatas's interaction with South Asian works and his critique of the Ahmadiyya, see Sevea's contribution to this volume.
52. *The Review of Religions* 34, no. 3 (March 1935): 82–86.

8

MAKING MEDINAS IN THE EAST
Islamist Connections and *Progressive Islam*

Terenjit Sevea

> The interaction of these Malays and Pathans will create new sacred spaces… the meeting and subsequent interaction of Maulana Maududi and Natsir created Medina in Pakistan and Indonesia
>
> *Mian Maqsood Ahmad*
> *Deputy Secretary General, Jama'at-i Islami Pakistan*

It was Mian Maqsood Ahmad who first drew my attention to a *madrasa* in the North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan, where Malay teachers "educated illiterate Pathans about true Islam".[1] Through a series of interviews with Islamists from bodies such as the Jama'at-i Islami Pakistan (JIP) and the Deobandis at Dar Uloom, I have become increasingly aware of both the volume and dynamism of modern circulations of students, teachers, texts, and ideas between South and Southeast Asia. This chapter explores some of these connections through an examination of texts produced by South and Southeast Asian Islamists such as Muhammad Iqbal, Abul Ala Maududi, Hussein Alatas, and Mohammad Natsir. As diverse as these thinkers were, they were bound together across differences of culture and citizenship by shared sentiments for the establishment of a new and reinvigorated Islamic order for the modern world.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) has been hailed as one of the greatest Urdu poets, and celebrated as *Muffakir-i Pakistan* ("Thinker of Pakistan").[2]

While he was not part of the class of professional politicians emerging from opportunities accorded by the 1909 Morley-Minto reforms in colonial India,[3] Iqbal chastised intellectuals who stood aloof from politics and referred to his own work as *nala-i jung* (songs of war).[4] As a post-colonial critic and activist,[5] Hussein Alatas (1928–2007) held a number of academic positions in Singapore and Malaysia, and participated as an opposition leader in Malaysian politics. He also edited a short-lived but influential journal entitled *Progressive Islam* (1954–55) that "endeavored to conform to the true spirit of Islam".[6] Combining the reflections of scholars such as the aforementioned Islamists with prominent Indonesian politicians such as Mohammed Roem and Muhammad Hatta, and Pakistani critics such as J.W. Syed and Hamidullah Siddiqi, this journal reflected post-colonial concerns in Indonesia and Pakistan over the Islamic system and competing ideologies. The term "South-East Asia" appeared in *Progressive Islam* to emphasize the post-colonial revival of religious and ideational connections between South and Southeast Asia that had been impeded by European colonialism. Maududi (1903–79) and Natsir (1908–93) had emerged as the "most prominent voices of Islamist opposition" in Pakistan and Indonesia respectively.[7] The former established an academic centre, *Darul-Islam*, in colonial Punjab,[8] and established the Jama'at-i Islami in 1940, serving as its Amir (President) until 1972. Natsir presided over the Madjelis Sjoero Moslimin Indonesia (Masyumi) for most of the 1940s to 1950s, and served as the Indonesian prime minister for a brief period from 1950 to 1951. While Maududi regularly used print journalism as a vehicle for disseminating Islamism, Natsir's later frustrations with party politics led to him to adopt an almost exclusive reliance on the press to advance his agenda of religious propagation through the Dewan Dakwah Indonesia Islamiyah (DDII) under the Suharto regime.[9]

The epistemic community of Islamists in which these writers participated was one that rejected the idea of the Middle East as the *de facto* "centre" of Islam in the modern world. In no sense did Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir demonstrate traits of a peripheral consciousness. Rather, they confronted the historical legacy of the larger nominal *umma* for lapsing into a state "perpetually blurred and sleepishly detached" from what they viewed as "true Islam".[10] In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which these Islamists "returned to" or reconstructed classical texts and conceptions of Islam as ideals to be realized rather than inert historical legacies. This was evident in how some rhetorically created their own "Medinas" or "Ka'abas". In his poem *Kinar-i Ravi*, for example, Iqbal alleged to receive the "pleasure of the Ka'aba" and "message of prostration" on the banks of the Punjabi river, Raavi.[11] Elsewhere, he called for the "revival of Iran and Arabia",[12] claiming

that his "eyes were aligned with Medina and Najaf".[13] Similar constructions of sacred space were evident in Maududi's remarks, in the *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, on how there then existed no "environment out of India suitable to establish Medina".[14] Iqbal and Maududi also highlighted the significance of earlier South Asian Muslim thinkers such as Shah Waliullah (1703–62) and Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), and called upon the *umma* to keep abreast of South Asian Muslim thought.[15] While the prominence of the Gujarati scholar, Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658), in the early modern Acehnese court and his contribution to Malay-Muslim literature has been highlighted by a number of scholars, the modern relevance of South Asian Muslim intellectualism was evident in how Alatas and Natsir referred to Iqbal as the epitome of the "thinking section of the Islamic world".[16]

The self-understandings of South and Southeast Asian Islamists should thus be seen not as merely voices from the periphery, but rather as important interlocutors in global conversations on modern Islam. This chapter will account for how South and Southeast Asian Islamists attempted to reconstruct Islam into a modern "system" while endeavouring to remain sensitive to intricate, discursive connections within various articulations of Islamism. One theme evident in all the writings surveyed here is a revival of what they saw to be Muhammad's perfect "system" within a non-Arab context. Indeed, such reconceptualization of the way of the Prophet and the connections of contemporary Muslims to Muhammad were central to a wide range of South and Southeast Asian movements that attempted to popularize the idea of a "true Islam" accessible to Malay, Indonesian, Urdu, Punjabi, Persian, and Arabic audiences. In its "Editorial Announcement", *Progressive Islam* iterated its commitment to the "personality of the Prophet" through its work of countering Orientalist writings that they saw as undermining the image of Muhammad.[17]

Roxanne Euben has noted that the failure to engage Islamist texts has restricted the study of "Muslim fundamentalism" to approaches such as modernization theory, structural-functionalism, class analysis, and rational actors theory.[18] While the study of (problematic) constructions of "true Islam" avoids the notion of an Islamist metanarrative stipulated in "orthodox" texts,[19] this chapter privileges the role of Islamist self-understandings to overcome the reduction of South and Southeast Asian Islamism to local political and economic instrumentality.[20] While literature has generally approached Maududi and Natsir as archetypical Islamists, a number of commentators have dismissed Islamist facets of Iqbal and Alatas's writings as merely "poetic" or "philosophical".[21] In utilizing here the concept of "Islamism" (a term that has admittedly been significantly problematized), I am attempting to capture

the mechanisms through which such writings encompass, and challenge the dichotomy between "Islam" and "the political".[22] Some major concerns here are with the reconfiguration of modern understandings of "Islam", "God" and the "self" into political issues, rather than simply ontological and/or theological ones. The concept of "Islamism" encompasses how these "Muslims", "South Asians", and "Southeast Asians" have, knowingly or unknowingly, politicized Islam and Islamized politics in their writings.

"SOUTH-EASTERN" ISLAMISM

> [*Jihad*] infiltrates these central lands and authorities from the peripheries… [and] puts the idea of a centre itself in doubt by robbing it of one of its most important attributes — the ability to expand.
>
> Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad*

Devji's work highlights the significance of Islamist consciousness in the peripheries of Islam as opposed to being merely derivative or emanating from the core "Arab heartlands" of Islam. He locates the beginnings of *jihad*'s "infiltration" in Iqbal's reconstruction of Islam and modern intellectualism, which Devji casually terms as "striving and passion in the shadow of God's death".[23] This section approaches Islamists such as Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir in relation to their views on intellectualism as an integral aspect of being "Islamic",[24] as well as to their attempts to carve out a discursive space for their Islamism. While comparative literature on Muslim regions has often created new regional hierarchies, this Islamism was characterized by dynamic, multidirectional connections between Muslim regions. Unfortunately, scholarly attempts to revisit intellectual interaction between South and Southeast Asia have mostly reproduced resilient models of core-periphery relationships; for instance, the two leading articles on modern South-Southeast Asian Muslim intellectual networks have merely instituted hegemonic influences of Iqbal and Maududi on Southeast Asian thought.[25] Similarly, in the only scholarly work on *Progressive Islam*, it has been described as a simple "English language imitation of the Egyptian al-Manar magazine".[26] While the intricacies of textual appropriation are beyond the concerns of this chapter, it is worth highlighting that Southeast Asian intellectuals such as Alatas also refuted the works of Iqbal and Maududi for being reactionary impediments to a fuller Islamic socialism, and for being Manichean anti-Western polemics unlike Natsir's more informed writings, while some other Southeast Asian commentators had blatantly declared that Iqbal and Maududi fabricated Qur'anic injunctions.[27]

One defining characteristic of "South-Eastern" Islamism was its independence from traditional Islamic scholarship; the Islamist consciousness of Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir was far from being derivative of "central lands and authorities".[28] This was evident, for example, in the ways in which thinkers such as Iqbal and Alatas located the source of "true Islam" within the self, rather than in "*jahil* (ignorant) *mullah*, *maulana* and *allama*" who had negated the role Islamic intellectual leadership had to play in "updating" and "re-evaluating" Islam.[29] While differing over the value of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), these four Islamists drew a divide between "true Islam" and mere human tradition that allowed them to critique earlier/current nominal Islam as *fiqh* and as being detached from "true Islam".[30] Furthermore, these Islamists criticized the intellectual history of the Muslim world for incorporating a variety of Persian, Roman, Magian, Greek, Roman, monastic, and Arab cultural influences; these "foreign" influences were juxtaposed against their works that were self-referenced as a return to the "pristine message of Islam".[31]

These writings referred to their "true Islam" as "reconstructions", "renewals" and even as a "new Islam".[32] Indeed, Maududi reconstructed the Qur'anic concept of *jahiliyya* into being representative of the contemporary denial of God's sovereignty, rather than being a signification of pre-Islamic Arabia.[33] Such a construction allowed him to attack a variety of post-Revelation Islamic periods, including contemporary Islam, as being "nominal" in opposition to the authentic, "true Islam". The point to note here is that "true Islam" marked a significant departure from classical scholarship. Indeed, the sharp break the Islamists made from traditional textual authorities led Deobandi intellectuals such as Hussein Ahmad Madani (1849–1957), and ideologues of the Tablighi Jama'at, to attack the right to *ijtihad* (independent interpretation of textual, legal sources, the Qur'an and the Sunna) of Western-educated intellectuals such as Iqbal and Maududi, declaring their interpretations of the Qur'an to be mere expressions of personal opinion (*tafsir bil-ra'y*), leading to *fitna* (apostasy and rebellion against Islam).[34] Similarly, it has been noted that Islamists such as Natsir and Iqbal relied more on modern European categories than classical Arabic religious sciences to construct *agama* and *din* respectively.[35] In emphasizing that the *ulama* and larger *umma* keep up with intellectual developments in the West, Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir argued that such Western knowledge had Islamic roots; appropriating certain facets of supposed Western knowledge as such was itself a way for the *umma* to recover their "past".[36] In emphasizing the rational/ empirical aspects of "true Islam" and emphasizing its relevance, they indeed argued to be domesticating a version of modernity compatible with their own visions of Islam.[37]

A significant theme of these Islamist writings was the criticism of failed Muslim intellectual leadership. This implied appropriating Islamic authority for themselves and was a clear assertion of the superiority of their "new views" of Islam. These Islamists regularly attacked outdated commentaries on the Qur'an and treatises in the Islamic religious sciences for not appealing to contemporary Muslims, and being irrelevant to modernity. A common criticism within these South and Southeast Asian Islamist writings lay in the failure of "leaders of religion" to exercise *ijtihad* and be updated by intellectual developments.[38] In criticizing the "deep slumber" that the Muslim world had fallen into in comparison to the Christian West, Iqbal exclaimed that for the "last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary",[39] and Maududi attacked "Muslim scholars of the past" for reverting the *umma* to a "state 600 years ago".[40] The "immense responsibility" of modern Muslim intellectuals was a theme explicated by Iqbal in his seminal text, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*,[41] and pursued in *Progressive Islam* with clear references to archetypal Muslim intellectualism within the works of Iqbal and the prominent Aligarh thinker Amir Ali (1849–1928) who, unlike "modernists", did not disavow their "past", seeking a "synthesis" between the "past and present".[42] Iqbal emerged as iconic within the works of Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir due to his "responsible" Muslim intellectualism which was in tune with reviving the activist, revolution-inspiring Arabic poetry during the Prophet's era, and opposed the "dogma of Art for the sake of Art".[43] Natsir, for instance, argued that Iqbal revived the "fire to think" and enlivened the spirit of Islam in the *umma*; this, according to him, was contrary to Muslim intellectuals who linked "freedom of thought" to the disavowal of "tradition".[44] These appeals to reclaim Islamic authority inevitably led to an attack on the larger *umma*'s detachment from "true Islam". Maududi's and Natsir's attacks on nominal Muslims were evident in assertions such as "99% of Muslims [do] not know Islam",[45] and that the *umma* suffered from the "malady of lethargy", respectively.[46] While Maududi and Natsir referred to Iqbal's "revolutionary spirit", and strove to establish new eastern "Ka'abas" or "Medinas" through a range of activities (including electoral politics), Iqbal referred to South Asia as the centre or core of reawakening the hopes of Islam and the East.[47]

The complexities of "South-Eastern" Islamism cannot be simply captured by the now well-worn categories of either "pan-Islam" or "local Islam". In referring to specific historical events and contexts, these writings associated with these figures attempted to "recentre" the *umma* in the direction of their own particular spheres of activity. However these texts did not function simply to localize Islam. Rather, they approached "true Islam" as a transcendental

ideal that could be revived in various local contexts. The reconfiguring of the "local" was evident in how Iqbal viewed the fall of the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan in 1799, and the Turkish defeat at the battle of Navarino, as major events in "the political humiliation of Islam" and the harbinger of modern Islam and her problems. Iqbal's attempts to recentre South Asia within broader Islamic debates was apparent in claims that long-standing issues such as the conceptions of *jihad*, the Caliphate, and the issue of demarcating societies as "*dar al-harb*" or "*dar al-Islam*", and prophetic statements on the coming of the Imam Mahdi were "questions for Indian Muslims only".[48] This approach prompts a reconsideration of writings preoccupied with "fixing" Islamism either into a transnational Islamic "high-culture" providing religious and/or political stipulation,[49] or alternatively, local Islamic realities.[50] *Progressive Islam* regularly "recentred" South and Southeast Asian contexts from rural spaces to neo-colonial legal structures as symbolic of the need for Islamic systems, and more importantly, as "testing grounds" of Islam as a modern "system". This was evident in a variety of articles on issues such as Masyumi's and the Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia's (Muslim Labour Union of Indonesia) tensions with Communists, the "System of land tenure" on Muslim peasants which was depicted as the primary issue of global Islam, the condemned neo-colonial appropriation of English law in Pakistan, the public role of Pakistani women which was imperative for the internationalism of Islam, the spread of apostasy within Burmese villages, and the need for accessible Islamic publications within indigenous literature to counter the homogenizing tendencies of secular and non-Islamic state structures.[51]

The "South-Eastern Islamists" discussed in this chapter construed their visions of "true Islam" as an independent ideology that stood apart from the collectivity of a nominal *umma*.[52] For instance, a central theme of *Progressive Islam*, and Iqbal's and Maududi's writings, was refuting modern Muslim intellectuals who chose to contextualize Qur'anic verses and as such, deprive "true Islam" of its transcendental ideal that was accessible through contemporary human agency.[53] While Alatas attacked history for its "relativism" and stressed the need for "Islam" to be an ideal, Iqbal referred to the "Qur'anic method" as one that "adapted… to the advancing spirit of time", and Maududi noted, within *Progressive Islam*, that the "Islamic State can plan its reformist program in every age and every atmosphere".[54]

Islam was approached by these writers as an ideal to be revived locally through the principle of "movement" or "evolution". This was evident in *Progressive Islam*'s affirmation of Iqbal's emphasis on *ijtihad* as the motivator of Islam's dynamic adaptation to changing contexts.[55] Hamidullah Siddiqi for example, emphasized the need for the constant re-evaluation in Islam

through *ijtihad*, arguing that the decadence of the *umma* was the result of "fossilization" and mistaken ideas about Islam's rigid "permanence".[56] This task of re-evaluating Islam radically de-privileged the scholastic tradition of earlier *ulama* while elevating the status of the Islamists as the voice of the true Islamic community. Iqbal had argued that his Islamism was in line with the "pristine Islamic community" that ensured Islam could remain relevant and responsive to contemporary conditions through regularly re-evaluating Islam according to periodic requirements.[57] Similarly, Maududi approached the "spirit of *jihad*" as "explaining the law of Islam to meet the requirements of changing times",[58] and Muhammad's model as bearing the "the same revolutionary potential… [of] 1350 years ago… [for the] 20th century or 40th century… [for] India, America or Russia".[59] He also attacked the Middle Eastern *ulama*'s scholastic sophistry that had failed to develop Islam as a comprehensive system, and their inability to prevent the transformation of Turkey "a devoted Muslim nation from Islam to westernism", and [for] facilitating the "ruin [of] the whole world of Islam … Europe and America".[60] Along these lines the "South-Eastern Islamists" continuously argued that earlier works of Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) had failed to stir the *umma* to action and that new approaches were necessary to bring to life Islam's true meaning for the modern world.[61]

"MAKING MEDINAS": RECONSTRUCTING "ISLAM AS A SYSTEM"

> In Islam, religion is considered not only as an individual and personal affair but also as a social system… Islam is not only a religion in the Western sense, but also a social order… It is a way of life and it has to control every single aspect of our lives… [there is] no such thing as a double morality.
>
> Hussein Alatas, "The Islamic State"[62]

Another recurring motif in the writings of the South-Eastern Islamists is the reconstruction of Islam into a "system" in the modern sense of the term. Mohammad Roem, in an article that implicitly establishes a theory of the South Asian origin of Islam in Southeast Asia, notes that "religion [was and remains the] basis for bringing together the people's [sic] from South and Southeast Asia", where shared senses of the need to make life conform to God operated.[63] In a similar vein Natsir, in an address to the Pakistan Institute of World Affairs in 1952, noted that post-colonial Indonesia and Pakistan were linked by a shared sense of the integration of Islam in national life.[64] While this address also included Natsir's apologia for *Pancasila* as an ideology being driven by monotheism, his later disillusionment with secular tenets of the

Indonesian ideology, and the rise of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in the late 1950s, in itself facilitated his further identification with South Asian Islamists such as Maududi who abhorred the modern demarcation of the spheres of religion and politics, and the "mutilation" of Islam (as a comprehensive system) into a domestic religion.[65] Indeed, Maududi and Natsir attacked what they termed nominal Muslims for treating the Qur'an as a mere "book" rather than a political system/programme to be implemented.[66] Similarly, Iqbal and Natsir reconstructed Qur'anic concepts such as *tawhid* (unity of God) into a living social programme and "working idea".[67]

These Islamists approached "true Islam" as an all-encompassing political ideology rather than a theology. An underlying assumption of their writings was the reliance, in Talal Asad's words, on the "view of the social effectivity of ideologies",[68] wherein they ahistorically imagined "Islam" as an "ideology" in opposition (and superior) to pervasive ideologies such as communism, democracy, fascism, and nationalism. These texts were largely anti-hermeneutic in denying that their own readings were "interpretations"[69] and in undermining the historicity of texts.

Similar South and Southeast Asian Islamist critiques of the construction of "religion" as a separate sphere of human expression attacked "foreign" Greek philosophical, Christian, and post-Enlightenment influences that had come to influence the thinking of many Muslims. The editorial introduction to *Progressive Islam*, for instance, highlighted that while the journal's South and Southeast Asian contributors emphasized the rational/empirical aspects of "Islam", establishing it as a practical system, "Islam" was not to be confused as a "naturalistic religion".[70] Iqbal and Natsir attacked the *umma*'s appropriation of "neo-Platonism", read by Iqbal as "Christianity", and relegation of Islam to an "abstract philosophy".[71] In an article that appeared in *Progressive Islam*, Maududi attributes this relegation to Western philosophies that represented the "body" and "soul" as mutually antagonistic realms.[72] Alatas regularly responded to Orientalist representations by privileging Islam as an "all-embracing system" over Christianity,[73] and Maududi privileged "true Islam" over Christianity's lack of a "social creed" due to its other-worldly concept of "salvation".[74]

"Islam" emerged in these works as a comprehensive system that absorbed both the "material" and "spiritual" realms; Iqbal and Alatas attributed this to the religion's inherent "unifying principle".[75] They also condemned modern systems in vogue for being inferior due to the "sectional character" of Western sciences that failed to account for the interlinkage between "matter" and "spirit".[76] Like Iqbal, Alatas and Natsir criticized the sectional character of systems such as capitalism and socialism for privileging the "stomach" [or "material"] over "spirit".[77]

Iqbal, Maududi, Natsir and Alatas endeavoured to distinguish Islam from Christianity. While Iqbal reconstructed the Gods of Christianity and Islam as "love" and "power" respectively,[78] all these Islamists developed extensive critiques of Western secular, materialistic systems as "failures", and regularly called on the West to adopt Islam as a system or polity.[79] Indeed, *Progressive Islam* purported to pursue Iqbal's warning about the "dazzling exterior of Western civilization" while simultaneously engaging intellectual developments in the West.[80] A common facet of Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir's criticism of Western systems lay in declaring the "failure" of such systems due to the lack of a "higher ideal", "vision", or "hope" that Islam offered.[81] For example, Natsir identified with Iqbal's lament of the West's relegation of "higher values" to materialistic commercialism and utilitarianism,[82] and Alatas argued that a "spiritual vacuum" impeded the West's progress beyond primitiveness.[83] Echoing Maududi's criticism of the "suicide of Western civilization", Alatas lamented the ability of materialistic structures to be violently manipulated due to the lack of a "higher morality".[84] Furthermore, in a strain of "Third Worldism" that was common in the works of Iqbal and Maududi, Alatas proposed Islam as the "third solution" to the "failed" ideologies then currently in vogue: capitalism and communism.[85] Similarly, Natsir identified with the views of Inamullah Khan, the secretary of the South-South movement Mo'tamar-i Alam-i Islami, on "Islam" being a "great world force… keeping a middle course between communism and capitalism".[86]

Progressive Islam's emphasis on Islam as a modern ideology embodied the Islamist challenge to the larger *umma*'s neglect of the urgent need for a "religious system". Roem and Hatta, for example, privileged "religion" over non-religious systems due to religion's perceived comprehensiveness and infallibility through a "normative foothold".[87] Similarly, J.W. Syed drew on Amir Ali and Iqbal to conclude that "the Islam of Muhammad… [was] a life to be lived in the present",[88] and that "all this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit".[89]

A major preoccupation of Islamist writings on the neglect of "true Islam" was the psychological degeneration of the *umma*, a theme which is discussed further below. Natsir, for instance, located such degeneration within the psychological dichotomy that had been instituted between "progress" and "religion",[90] *ibadat* (worship) and *kerja* (work), and *lahir* (exoteric) and *batin* (esoteric) dimensions of practice,[91] as well as the "mental attitude" that prevented nominal Muslims from understanding that the actual "gravitational centre" of seemingly demarcated spheres such as *ilmu* (knowledge), *kekuasaan* (power), and *harta* (material possession) was "Islam".[92] Similarly, Maududi attacked nominal Muslims for referring to *ibadat* as "acts of prayer and fasting"

rather than servitude to God as the sole political Sovereign,[93] and for failing to privilege "political power" over "sermonizing".[94]

Maududi's views on the Islamic State, arguably the first modern conception of the subject, were promoted on the pages of *Progressive Islam* with captions expressing Alatas' defence of his views against attacks by nominal Muslims.[95] In opposition to the secular state, Maududi wrote of Islam's "high ideal" of establishing a comprehensive state wherein "moral principles be observed in every sphere of life" permanently.[96] The ahistorical ideal of the Islamic State was also evident in Roem's claim that Muhammad had established a social order possessing the "the nature of a modern state".[97] Maududi elsewhere argued that while the Islamic State controlled both private and public realms like fascist, socialist, and communist states, Muhammad's system was incapable of developing into a "totalitarian and authoritarian state".[98] In opposition to secular systems in vogue, Islamists such as Iqbal and Maududi celebrated Islam's professed ability to curb abuses of power. While Iqbal emphasized the need to subject "power" to the dictates of religion (*din*) in a poem entitled *Quvat aur Din* (Power and Religion),[99] Maududi employed the metaphor of "*Quvat-i Islam*" in texts such as *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, to argue for power's incorruptibility under Islam.[100] Along similar lines to those of Natsir,[101] Maududi declared that the Qur'anic concept of *hukum* signified the political sovereignty of God rather than His theological judgment:[102]

> Nothing can claim sovereignty be it a human being, a family, a class or a group … God alone is the Sovereign … [a] state that is established in accordance with this political theory will in fact be a human caliphate under the sovereignty of God.[103]

Maududi's and Natsir's affinities were also apparent in their respective reconstructions of Islam into a "theo-democracy" and "theistic democracy".[104] *Progressive Islam* regularly stressed Islam as a solution to problems endemic within Western democracies such as "tyranny of the masses",[105] and Maududi even referred to Islam as the "perfect form of democracy".[106] Alatas depicted the "democratic method" of dominant Indonesian parties as within the "political traditions of Islam",[107] and affiliated himself with Amir Ali's views on the system of the Rashidun Caliphs being the "perfect democratic order",[108] while Hamidullah Siddiqi and Southeast Asian translators of Iqbal such as Osman Raliby criticized the materialist reductionism of Western democracy to "economic opportunity".[109]

At the same time, their conceptions on the Islamic State problematically assumed that Muslim majorities legitimized Islamist models for South and Southeast Asian states such as Pakistan and Indonesia. Even though they

seemed to neglect the option of more representative orders, it is worth highlighting the discussion of non-Muslim "minorities" in these writings. Natsir, Maududi, and Alatas declared that in Muslim majority areas, it was injurious (even for non-Muslims) not to implement an Islamic State,[110] claiming that their visions of an Islamic State were the ideal for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Natsir, for example, declared that the "Islamic State is not a Theocratic State"[111] due to "tolerance [being the] explicit teaching of the Qur'an" and the concept of church/priestly rule being alien to Islam,[112] going so far as to argue that all episodes of seeming "zealotry" in Islamic history had solely been due to non-Muslim subject rebellions.[113] Similarly, in his editorial emphases, Alatas apologetically defended and identified with the "Islamic view [that originated] totally from the Islamic angle" of Maududi and the president of the Darul 'Ulum in Karachi, Muhammad Shafi, on the Islamic State as the protector of non-Muslim rights. In their writings, the Islamic State emerged as superior to the secular one due to its "sacred and inviolable obligation" to protect minorities.[114]

In envisaging an Islamic system, all the aforementioned Islamists opposed the Western concept of secular nationalism that had demarcated distinct spheres for religion and politics and instituted national interests as the highest ideal over ethics and religiosity. Iqbal's likening of the Western nation state to an "idol" was appropriated by Maududi, Natsir, and contributors to *Progressive Islam* such as J.W. Syed.[115] Their arguments also resonated with Iqbal's critique of the replacement of the "universal ethics of Christianity… by systems of national ethics" in the course of Western history,[116] and they frequently attacked "nationalism" as idolatry and sustaining "godless polities".[117] Maududi, for example, argued that adopting the "nation state" or "national elites" as *rabb* (lords) and *ilah* (deities) in place of the sole Sovereign (God) was tantamount to idolatry,[118] and Natsir refuted nationalism as *jahiliyya*.[119] Like Iqbal, Natsir critiqued the dominant "*jahil*" views on politics as European imperialism's "most effective weapon"; nationalism, he said, had shattered the religious unity of Islam.[120] Furthermore, Maududi's and Natsir's pamphlets often attacked the *umma*'s relegation of Qur'anic injunctions and pressing issues such as the "Palestine Problem" to being exclusively for Arab or certain territories.[121]

In a speech at the Aligarh Muslim University in India in 1955, then-Indonesian Vice-President Mohammad Hatta appropriated Iqbal's conception of "Islam" as a "league of nations", believing in the functionality of "artificial boundaries", but embracing neither exclusivist "nationalism nor imperialism".[122] While Natsir's preoccupations with creating an Islamic base for Indonesia had evolved through his tense relationship with Soekarno, a regular facet of his view of nationalism was that Islam had to be "restored as a guiding factor in

human relations … [as] the only restraint against fratricidal and internecine war".[123] Indeed, in almost neglecting the racial violence incurred in the partition of colonial India in 1947, Natsir romantically reflected on the All India Muslim League's leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah's, ideal of an Islamic State, Pakistan.[124] For Natsir, the Islamic State, unlike the secular nation state, would not facilitate racialism and ethnocentrism as these were antithetical to "Islam".[125] Such idealization of Islam as a superior system was common in the texts of Iqbal and contributors to *Progressive Islam* such as Alatas and Siddiqi who firstly, regularly declared that Western systems had failed due to the negation of "ethics",[126] and secondly, highlighted recommendations by British idealists to the West to adopt "Islam" as a remedy to intolerant systems, nationalist violence, and racial consciousness.[127]

In idealizing Islam as a superior system, these Islamists criticized the psychological subjugation of the *umma* resulting from what they saw as the neglect of Islam as a system by "Anglo-Muhammadans", "half-Westernized, educated Muslims" and "de-Islamized Muslims".[128] Maududi, Natsir, and commentators in *Progressive Islam* regularly lamented that "centuries of abject submission" had created an "inferiority complex" among nominal Muslims, preventing their adoption of the "superior" Islamic system and Islamic State.[129] In a trope oft repeated by South and Southeast Asian (and even Middle Eastern) Islamists, Maududi declared that the present-day *umma* had placed "Islam on trial" wherein it perpetuated its subjugation through rejecting Islam as a system on the whole, or domesticating it to Western systems in vogue.[130] It was in light of this that Alatas, in his discussions with Jama'at-i Islami sympathizers in Karachi, defended his reference to Islam as "progressive" against the charge that it domesticated Islam to "progress", arguing instead that the term was chosen to emphasize that Islam was "true progress".[131]

Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and other commentators in *Progressive Islam* all called for greater attention to be paid to the complex processes of Muslim subjugation in the modern world. These included the Muslim intellectual appropriation of Marxism as an ideology of emancipation from capitalist/imperialist structures.[132] J.W. Syed and Siddiqi also argued that the Western ideologies of nationalism, Marxism, and even "freedom" merely instituted new "chains" with which to imprison the *umma*.[133] Siddiqi, Iqbal, and Maududi argued that the failure of Muslims to accept God as the sole Sovereign had led to the institution of new *ilah* and *rabb*.[134] In relation to psychological subjugation, Iqbal, Maududi, and Alatas argued that structures such as capitalism or communism did not function simply through material/utilitarian subjugation, but rather through an individual neurosis of subjects becoming "raw materials" and neglecting Islam as a system.[135] As J.W. Syed noted, it was a "dangerous

delusion [that imperialism was dead] … methods of exploitation have become more expertly manipulated".[136] Rejecting the basis for appropriating Marxism, these writings proposed that the attractive tenets of the ideology were inherent in Islam. While E. Rasjad, a spokesman of the Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia, argued that "mass action" was equivalent to "the Moslem Way of Life",[137] Alatas argued that "Islam" was "true socialism" in emphasizing "economic welfare", "socio-economic reforms" and the imperative that every individual has the right to possess the "produce of his own labour".[138]

Such critiques encompassed diverse reconstructions of the "Muslim self", and rebuttal of the nominal *umma*'s indulgence in a "religion" of ascetic practices instead of political assertion, inadvertently furthering the aforementioned psychological subjugation.[139] Such reconstructions were evident in Maududi's revitalized conception of *khalifa* (representative of God) as a man whose "spiritual development" involved this-worldly, political participation.[140] In an editorial caption to Maududi's reconstruction, Alatas apologetically emphasized that the former's view was driven by a "great belief in human reason".[141] Similarly, Natsir and Iqbal highlighted that the "Muslim self" was a representative of the sole Sovereign, God, and implied the lack of a "divide between God and man" made God and man "co-workers" within this-worldly political assertion.[142] Various contributions to *Progressive Islam* furthermore reconstructed the ideal "Muslim self" as an *insan al-kamil* (more or less perfect individuals).[143] Like Iqbal, Alatas for example, approached this "*insan*" as a political ideal of the "highest power… real ruler… [of the] Kingdom of God on earth".[144]

It was in light of such reconstructions that these reformers attacked monastic religious practices such as contemporary Sufism as being alien to "true Islam" and responsible for the sorry state of the contemporary *umma*.[145] While Iqbal associated a number of Sufis with Plato and attacked them for drawing Muslims away from "true Islam",[146] Natsir attacked mystical "innovation and superstition" that had relegated Islam to "private religious practices".[147] Similarly, Iqbal's revival of the "ego" against monastic, Sufi repressions found resonance within Natsir's writings and a number of commentaries in *Progressive Islam*.[148] Natsir identified with Iqbal's notion of "*khudi*" (read affirmed and undying, Muslim self) as the "fire of hope for the *umma* asleep in monasticism",[149] and Alatas celebrated Iqbal's notion of "the completest ego" as a revision of fatalistic history and monastic/ascetic religiosity that limited human agency.[150]

In opposition to exemplary manifestations of "independent" Muslim intellectualism, Islamists such as Iqbal, Natsir, and Maududi condemned the Magian suppression of a post-Prophetic, individual Muslim intellect/

responsibility to revive Muhammad's system.[151] Iqbal's attacks on the Ahmadiyya role in the *umma*'s psychological subjugation have been recurrent within South and Southeast Asian anti-Ahmadiyya polemic wherein he argued that the anticipation of a Messiah/Revelation had made "slaves … accept their political environment as final"; this, ultimately, suppressed the aforementioned self-affirmation.[152] In the 1930s, the Malayan journal *Genuine Islam* reprinted Iqbal's writings on "Ahmadism", demonstrating its evolving anti-Ahmadiyya position. A particularly significant site of "contact" between these South and Southeast Asian Islamists was their denunciation of efforts, in Iqbal's words, to "carve out from the *ummat* of the Arabian Prophet a new *ummat* for the Indian Prophet" by the Ahmadiyya *jama'at*.[153] The prominence of South Asian Islam was ironically made evident in how these Islamists condemned this religious movement of South Asian origin for posing the "greatest" challenge to Islam through threatening the unique authority of Muhammad.[154] Maududi aggressively criticized "Qadianism" as an ideology on par with communism or fascism for subjugating the "Muslim masses",[155] and Alatas found a source for his broader critique of "psychological captivity" in a "*bebalian*" (intellect-bereft) Ahmadiyya pamphlet legitimizing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's (1835–1908) prophethood.[156] Furthermore, *Progressive Islam* pursued Iqbal's and Maududi's declaration of Ahmadis as "non-Muslims"; indeed, Alatas defended Maududi's controversial pamphlet "The Qadiani Problem" after the Pakistani anti-Ahmadiyya riots in 1953, arguing that opposition to the Qadian Ahmadiyya is something in which the whole world of Islam was united.[157]

CONCLUSION

This chapter has endeavoured to examine the self-understandings of South and Southeast Asian Islamists as important voices in the reconstruction of modern Muslim thought. The emphasis has thus been highlighting the complex discursive connections between a select circle of South and Southeast Asian thinkers who were developing their own global vision of "true Islam" in the late nineteenth, and early and mid-twentieth century. A major thrust of their work was an attempt to revive what they saw as the greater "South-Eastern Asian" "cultural understanding" and Islamic visions whose development had been impeded by European imperialism.[158] Re-reading the writings of Iqbal, Maududi, Alatas, and Natsir can thus serve as a resource for understanding modern Muslim visions of the "*umma* in the East". In conclusion, I return to the theme of Medina-making in Iqbal's *Kinar-i Ravi* that serves to counter the persistent Arab-centric biases in modern scholarship. Iqbal's poetic expression

of his experience of the Ka'aba in Punjab was a clarion call for a revaluation of the legacies of Muslim culture in the East, and the imagination of Islam in the modern world. In it, Iqbal evokes images of earlier, and now "hidden", Mughal structures as symbols of Islam, and as linked to "the undying self" (*khudi*), which "may be out of sight but it never disappears completely (*fana*')".[159]

Notes

1. In discussing "Medina-making", Ahmad was referring to Maududi's emphasis on reproducing the first Islamic system established by Muhammad in Medina. I am grateful to JIP members for a series of conversations and interviews in July/August 2006, and April/May and July 2007. In particular, Mian Maqsood Ahmad, Ayub Munir, and Muhammad Ilyas Ansari in Lahore, Pakistan, provided valuable insights.
2. The depiction of Iqbal as an Indian or Pakistani poet has preoccupied the work of many nationalist historians. For the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to note that the concept and term Pakistan had not been developed in Iqbal's lifetime, and that the intricacies of his call for a separate Muslim majority state within the Indian federation have often been neglected.
3. Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 177.
4. Chastising the "dogma of Art for the sake of Art", Iqbal referred to his poetry as revolutionary critique, a "song-of-war" in the *Iqbal Namah*. While he never wrote a work of Qur'anic exegesis in the classical mode (*tafsir*), Iqbal was prolific in producing "topical commentaries". See: J.J.G. Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 13–14; IS Sevea, *Contesting Western Political Discourse, Re-interpreting Islam: Muhammad Iqbal on the Nation and its Development* (University of Oxford, Unpublished Dissertation), p. 88; Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: A Notebook of Allama Iqbal*, edited by Javid Iqbal (Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali, 1961), p. 148.
5. Terenjit Sevea, "Syed Hussein Alatas: The Postcolonial Oeuvre", *Opinion Asia*, January 2007.
6. While Alatas has regularly been declared a secular intellectual, this chapter largely endeavours to examine his "Islamist" expressions in *Progressive Islam*.
7. R. Michael Feener, "Constructions of Religious Authority in Indonesian Islamism: 'The Way and the Community' Reimagined", *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, edited by Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 141.
8. Maududi's *khutubat* in Pathankot have been reproduced and widely distributed within English-speaking audiences. *Fundamentals of Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2002); *Let Us be Muslims* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2002).

9. This was particularly due to the dismal election results for the Masyumi in 1955 that led to Natsir's deriding of the majority of Indonesian Muslims for being detached from Islam. See: Feener, "Constructions of Religious Authority", p. 146.
10. M. Natsir, *Berbahagialah Perintis* (Jakarta: Sinar Hudaya-Documenta, 1971), p. 5.
11. Muhammad Iqbal, *Bang-e Dara* (Lahore*:* Ilm-o-Irfan Publishers, 2002), pp. 94–95.
12. Muhammad Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Lahore*:* Ilm-o-Irfan Publishers, 2002), pp. 530–31.
13. Sevea, *Contesting Western Political Discourse,* p. 57. Javed Majeed claims that Iqbal often stopped short of usurping prophethood for himself; in highlighting his "different Islam", the latter autobiographically noted that he was aware of drunkenness and the *Shari'a* concurrently, and an equal of Mansur [al-Hallaj, d. 922] in mysticism. Javed Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity: Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
14. Maududi, *West vs. Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1992), p. 309.
15. Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1972); Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2003), pp. 97, 122.
16. Alatas, *Reflections on the Theories of Religion* ('s-Gravenhage: Drukkerij Pasmans, 1963), pp. 10-11; Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", in *Kebudayaan Islam dalam Perspektif Sejarah: Kumpulan Karangan*, edited by H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari (Jakarta: Girimukti Pasaka, 1988).
17. Hussein Alatas, "Editorial Announcement", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 1 (August 1954): 1.
18. Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 20–23. Indeed, the focus on the content of texts has been limited in literature on late colonial (post-1857) South Asian Islam as a "slight religion", that is, as "reactionary" to the bourgeois economic concerns of colonialism, a Hindu majority and the demand for a separate nation-state. See W.C. Smith, "The Historical Development in Islam of the Concept of Islam as an Historical Development", *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 48; K.A. Nizami, *On Islamic History and Culture* (Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i Delli, 1995); Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Ahmad and G.E. von Grunebaum, eds., *Muslim Self-statement in India and Pakistan 1857–1968* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970); Hafeez Malik, *Iqbal, Poet-philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).
19. See William Roff, "Introduction", *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 1–10.

20. This has been evident in even works on the impact of print, for example, in "pamphlet wars". See M. Pernau, "The Delhi Urdu *Akhbar* between Persian *Akhbarat* and English News Essays", *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003): 105–31; Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 48; Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp. 80–82. Laffan notes how Wertheim draws on W.C. Smith's writings on Indian reformism, arguing that Southeast Asian reformism of the early twentieth century encompassed a "bourgeois current", introducing revised conceptions of individualism and rationalism. *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 4.
21. Interview with Javid Iqbal conducted by author, Lahore, July 2006; Mona Abaza, "Syed Hussein Alatas and Progressive Islam between the Middle East and Southeast Asia", *Local and Global*: *Social Transformation in Southeast Asia. Essays in Honour of Professor Syed Hussein Alatas*, edited by Riaz Hassan (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 258. Furthermore, a complication arose from Alatas's later comments on the Islamic State being a philosophical ideal.
22. See Armando Salvatore, *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity* (Reading, Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 1997).
23. Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 63.
24. Alatas and Natsir identified with Iqbal's assertion that intellectualism was a necessary condition of being "religious". See Hussein Alatas, *Reflections on the Theories of Religion* ('s-Gravenhage: Drukkerij Pasmans, 1963), p. 105; M. Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka* (Jakarta: Hudaya, 1970); M. Natsir, *Hidupkan Kembali Idealisme dan Semangat Pengorbanan!* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970).
25. See A. Ionova, "Muhammad Iqbal and Social Thought in South-East Asia", *The Work of Muhammad Iqbal: Articles by Soviet Scholars*, edited by A.R. Malik (Lahore: People's Publishing House, 1983); Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdūdī's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia", *The Muslim World* 93, no. 3–4 (2003: 429–64.
26. Abaza, "Syed Hussein Alatas and Progressive Islam between the Middle East and Southeast Asia", p. 251.
27. Hussein Alatas, *Islam dan Sosialisma* (Penang: Seruan Masa, 1976), pp. 23–24, 55; Hussein Alatas, *Kita dengan Islam: Tumbuh Tiada Berbuah* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1979); for an interesting insinuation that Iqbal was a "natural communist", see Ashraf Nurdin, *Pujangga Iqbal* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1985).
28. This is not to argue that these intellectual positions differed distinctly from other modern reformist positions in the Middle East.
29. Interview with Javid Iqbal, 2006; Alatas, *Kita dengan Islam*, p. 5.
30. Similarly, as Euben notes, in reconstructing *Shari'a* as an Islamic ideal, the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb (1906–66) attacked contemporary *fiqh*. *Enemy in the Mirror*, pp. 79–87.

31. Quoted from Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, edited by A.R. Tariq (Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1973), p. 106; also, Maududi's *Tafhim al-Qur'an* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2003), pp. 12–13.
32. For an example of such exclamations, see Iqbal, *Gulshan-i Raz Jadid (New Rose Garden of Mystery) and Bandagi Namah (Book of Servitude)*, translated by M.H. Hussain (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1969), pp. 59–60.
33. For an in-depth explication of *jahili* manifestations, see Maududi, *Islam and Ignorance* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1976); and Maududi's *Khutubat* in Pathankot, *Fundamentals of Islam*; *Let us be Muslims*. For such positions Maududi was accused of *bid'a* ("blameworthy innovation") by some Deobandis.
34. Pamphlets condemning "Maududiyat" are still regularly distributed at Deoband. For an explication of Madani's *Maktubat Sheikh-ul-Islam*, see Sevea, *Contesting Western Political Discourse,* Essay 4. I am grateful to Salman Idrees and Mohammed Fakhruddin for insights into the criticisms of "Maududiyat" within circles of the Tablighi Jamaat in Raiwind and Seri Petaling, April/May 2008.
35. Indeed, Natsir concluded like the Orientalist H.A.R. Gibb that "Islam is much more than a system of theology; it is a complete civilization". M. Natsir, *Some Observations Concerning the Role of Islam in National and International Affairs* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1954); Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*, 2007.
36. For example, see Hussein Alatas, "Our Intellectual Horizon", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 10 (May 1955): 1–3; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 7; M. Natsir, "The Contribution of Islam to Civilization", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 2 (1954): 3.
37. Similarly, it has been argued that the label "Modernist" is inadequate to capture Islamist expressions such as those of the "*Kaum Muda*" reformism. See Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, pp. 7–8.
38. For example, refer to Hamidullah Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Islamic Law", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 3–4 (October/November 1955): 14–22; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 42, 174.
39. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 7.
40. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 15.
41. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 97.
42. Hussein Alatas, "Some Problems of Leadership in Islamic Society", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 6 (January 1955): 1–2.
43. Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, pp. 81, 148; Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, translation of *Asrar-i Khudi* by R.A. Nicholson (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1950), pp. 35–41.
44. M. Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka* (Jakarta: Hudaya, 1970), pp. 21, 80.
45. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 38–39, 223.
46. For example, refer to Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta".
47. Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, p. 109.

48. Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 124–25.
49. See Farzana Shaikh, "Muslims and Political Representation in Colonial India: The Making of Pakistan", *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986): 539; Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 5–6.
50. See Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, ed., *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation, and Conflict* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, *c*2004); V. Das, "For a Folk-theology and Theological Anthropology of Islam", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 18, no. 2 (1984): 293–300.
51. E. Rasjad, "Sarikat Buruh Islam Indonesia: The Moslem Labour Union of Indonesia", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 9 (April 1955): 11–12; Alatas, "Land Reforms and the Destiny of the Muslims", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 9 (April 1955): 1–3; Hamidullah Siddiqi, "Reconstruction of Islamic Law", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 11 (June 1955): 1–3; Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, "Some Aspects of Life in Pakistan To-Day", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 3 (October 1954): 5; Maung-Ko Gaffari, "Islam in Burma", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 2 (September 1954): 4.
52. Shahrough Akhavi, "The Dialectic in Contemporary Egyptian Social Thought: The Scripturalist and Modernist Discourses of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan Hanafi", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (August 1997): 387.
53. Refer to Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 36–38; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. 80–82.
54. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 82; Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maudoodi, "The Political System of Islam", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 2 (September 1954): 2; Alatas, "Islam and the Crisis in Europe", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 12 (July 1955): 9.
55. Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy", pp. 21–22; Siddiqi, "Reconstruction of Islamic Law", pp. 11–12; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 148.
56. Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy", pp. 14–22.
57. Iqbal criticized Sufis, the *ulama*, and Muslim intellectuals for impeding the "Qur'anic method" of regularly reconstructing Islam, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. v, 4, 32, 168.
58. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 35.
59. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 304; this was a recurrent theme in Maududi's *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, (Lahore: Daftar-i-Tarjuman al-Qur'an, 1927).
60. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 76–77, 98, 108.
61. For example, see Adams, "Mawdudi's *Tafhim*", pp. 309–11.
62. Hussein Alatas, "The Islamic State", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 3 (October 1954): 1–2.
63. Mohammad Roem, "South East Asia Co-operation", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 11 (June 1955): 3–8.
64. Natsir, *Some Observations Concerning the Role of Islam*, p. 1; Natsir, "Negara Islam Bukan Negara Theokrasi", *Agama dan Negara Dalam Perspektif Islam* (Jakarta: Media Da'wah, 2001), pp. 128–45.

65. Interview with Maqsood, 2007; Maududi, *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, pp. 134–38; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 14–24, 294–98; Maududi, *Let Us Be Muslims*, pp. 105, 124. Soekarno alleged that Natsir's evolution also facilitated the latter's contact with the United States' embassy.
66. Natsir, *Berbahagialah Perintis*, p. 18; Maududi, *Let Us Be Muslims*, pp. 110–16.
67. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. 147, 154; Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", p. 208.
68. Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam", *Occasional Papers: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1986), p. 13.
69. Euben highlights in Qutb's texts an aversion to Islam becoming a "subject for intellectual mastery" and "denial that his own interpretation of Islam is an act of interpretation", *Enemy in the Mirror*, pp. 78–87.
70. Alatas, "Editorial Announcement", p. 1.
71. Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka*, p. 30; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. v, 131; Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, translated by A.J. Arberry (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), pp. 67–68; Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, pp. 32–34, 52; S. von Popp, *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power: A Post-structural Approach to this Persian Lyrical Poetry* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004), p. 76. For Maududi's critique of a philosophical basis for privatizing Islam, see Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp 36–38.
72. Maududi, "The Spiritual System of Islam", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 2 (September 1955): 7–10.
73. Hussein Alatas "Islam and the Times", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 7–8 (February/March 1955): 1–2.
74. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 82–87.
75. Alatas, "Our Intellectual Horizon", pp. 1–3; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. 2, 9–10, 25, 41–42.
76. Hussein Alatas, "Religion and Science", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 1 (August 1954): 2–3.
77. Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", pp. 207–208; Alatas, "Land Reforms and the Destiny of the Muslims", pp. 1–3.
78 Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, p. 64.
79. For examples, see Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, p. 67; Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 163–64; Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 79–83; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 33, 76; Alatas, "The Islamic State", pp. 1–2.
80. Alatas, "Editorial Announcement", p. 1. Alatas noted that "European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture", *Reflections on the Theories of Religion*, pp. 10–11.

81. Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, p. 57; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 80; Alatas, "Islam and the Crisis in Europe", p. 9; Alatas, "Regeneration of Islamic Societies", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 2 (1954): 1.
82. This is a recurrent theme in Natsir's texts. See for example, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", p. 206.
83. Alatas, "Islam and the Crisis in Europe", p. 9. In a critique resonant of Nietzschean and Marxist ones, Alatas challenged the "paralysing effect of functional rationalization" on independent thought and the facility to "hope" due to the processes of industrialization, nihilism, the multiplication of mass men, and elitism. See Hussein Alatas, "The Industrialization of Islamic Society", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 11 (June 1955): 1–3.
84. Alatas, "Religion and Science", pp. 2–3.
85. Alatas, "Our Intellectual Horizon", pp. 1–3.
86. Natsir, *Some Observations Concerning the Role of Islam*, p. 4.
87. Mohammad Roem, "Religion and Politics", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 12 (July 1955): 8; Mohammad Hatta, "The Necessity of Religion", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 9 (April 1955): 3.
88. J.W. Syed, "Islam and Material Progress", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 7–8 (February/March 1955): 6.
89. J.W. Syed, "Islam and Secular Democracy [II]", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 6 (January 1955): 2; See also J.W. Syed, "Islam and Secular Democracy", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 4–5 (November/December 1954): 4–6.
90. Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka*, pp. 7–8.
91. M. Natsir, *Gubahlah Dunia dengan Amalmu Sinari Zaman dengan Iman-mu* (Jakarta: Hudaya, 1970), p. 12; Interestingly, Natsir was furthering Iqbal's critique of the demarcation of *zahir* and *batin* ("exoteric" and "esoteric" dimensions of religion), see *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. 150, 9–10.
92. M. Natsir, *Ilmu, Kekuasaan and Harta Adalah Amanat Allah* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1967), p. 21.
93. Maududi, *Fundamentals of Islam*, p. 147; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 297; *Let Us Be Muslims*, p. 137.
94. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1969), p. 160.
95. Alatas, Editorial Caption to Maududi's "The Spiritual System of Islam", p. 7.
96. Maududi, "The Political System of Islam", p. 2.
97. Roem, "Religion and Politics", p. 8.
98. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 140; also see Roem, "Religion and Politics", p. 8.
99. Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, p. 491. Interestingly, during my interview with Javid Iqbal in 2006, he inaccurately re-presented the Allama's critique of "power detached from *din* (faith)" and "*din* without politics" as "the worst poison" and "tyranny" respectively, as evidence of Iqbal being a secularist and modernist par excellence.

100. Maududi, *al-Jihad fil-Islam*, pp. 41–42, 78.
101. Natsir, *Berbahagialah Perintis*, p. 21.
102. For a development of this "political" reading of God and Divinity, refer to Maududi's introduction to the *Tafhim al-Qur'an*.
103. Maududi, "The Political System of Islam", p. 2.
104. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 134; Yusril Ihza, "Combining Activism and Intellectualism: The Biography of Mohammad Natsir", *Studia Islamika* 2, no. 1 (1995): 137.
105. Alatas, "Regeneration of Islamic Societies", p. 1.
106. Maududi, "The Political System of Islam", p. 2.
107. Alatas, "Islam and the Times", p. 2.
108. Alatas, "Our Intellectual Horizon", pp. 1–3.
109. Osman Raliby, "Dari Penjalin", *Pembangunan Kembali Alam Pikiran Islam*, translated by Raliby (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1966), p. xix; Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Islamic Law", p. 16.
110. Feener, "Constructions of Religious Authority", p. 145; Alatas, "Islamic State", p. 2. See also Maududi's views on the rights and responsibilities of non-Muslims in *Islamic Law and Constitution*.
111. Natsir, "Negara Islam Bukan Negara Theokrasi", pp. 128–45.
112. M. Natsir, "Religious Freedom and Theocracy in an Islamic State", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 3 (October 1954): 1–2.
113. Natsir, "Religious Freedom and Theocracy", p. 1.
114. See Alatas, Editorial Caption to Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi's "The Position of Non-Muslims in the Islamic State", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 1 (August 1955): 3; Alatas, Editorial Caption to Maududi's "The Spiritual System of Islam", p. 7.
115. J.W. Syed, "Muslim World at the Cross-roads", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 5 (December 1955): 8–10; Muhammad Iqbal, *Persian Psalms*, translated by A.J. Arberry (London/Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1948/1949), pp. 26–27.
116. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 163; Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", pp. 204–05; Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Islamic Law", p. 16.
117. J.W. Syed, "Implementation of the Universal Declaration", pp. 7–10.
118. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 256; *Islamic Law and Constitution*, pp. 124–35; *Short History of the Revivalist Movement*, pp. 8–10; also see Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, pp. 61–62; *Bandagi Namah*, pp. 57–58.
119. M. Natsir, *Keragaman Hidup Antar Agama; Chuthbah Bapak Mohd. Natsir pada Hari-Raya Idul-Fitri 1 Sjawal 1387H./1 Januari 1968 M.; Dilapangan Projek Senen Djakarta* (Jakarta: Hudaya, 1979), p. 13.
120. Natsir, *Kebudayaan Islam dalam Perspektif Sejarah: Kumpulan Karangan*, edited by Natsir and Endang Saifuddin Anshari (Jakarta: Girimukti Pasaka, 1988), p. 276. S.H. Ahmad, ed., Muhammad Iqbal, *His Political Ideas at Crossroads: A Commentary on Unpublished Letters to Professor Thompson* (Aligarh: Printwell Publications, 1979), p. 36.

121. M. Natsir, *Masalah Palestina* (Jakarta: Hudaya, 1970), pp. 31–36. Maududi opposed "settler colonialism" in Palestine as one of a Jewish idolatrous preoccupation with "material bliss … regarding the promised land of Palestine as the paradise", *Islamic Law and Constitution*, pp. 157–58; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 124.
122. Mohammad Hatta, "Islam dan Masyarakat: Pidato di Depan Para Mahasiswa Universitas Islam Aligar di India, 29 Oktober 1955", in *Kumpulan Pidato II: Dari Tahun 1951 s.d. 1979*, edited by Wangsa Widjaja and Meutia F. Swason (Jakarta: Inti Idayu, 1983); also, see Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 159.
123. Natsir, *Some Observations Concerning the Role of Islam*, p. 14; also refer to Roem, "Religion and Politics", p. 8.
124. Peter Burns, *Revelation and Revolution: Natsir and the Panca Sila* (Townsville: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1981), p. 23.
125. Natsir, *Keragaman Hidup Antar Agama*, p. 13.
126. Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Legal Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Islamic Law", pp. 14–22.
127. Alatas, "The Islamic State", pp 1–2; "Our Intellectual Horizon", p. 12.
128. Alatas, "Our Intellectual Horizon", pp. 1–3; Alatas, Editorial Caption to Shafi's "The Position of Non-Muslims in the Islamic State", p. 3; Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 204–05; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 172; Terenjit Sevea, "Islamist Questioning and Colonialism: Towards an Understanding of the Islamist Oeuvre", *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7 (2007): 1387–89.
129. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, pp. 119–20; Natsir, "The West and the World of Islam: A Concise Exposition of Relevant Factors Connected with the Attainment of Cooperation between the West and the World of Islam", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 4–5 (November/December 1954): 5; Alatas, "The Position of Non-Muslims in the Islamic State", p. 3; Alatas, "The Islamic State", p. 1; Abdul Hameed, "Theocracy and the Islamic State", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 7–8 (February/March 1955): 2.
130. Maududi, *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, p. 15; *Islamic Law and Constitution*, pp. 119–20.
131. Through re-reading "socialism" in Iqbal, Alatas also declared that Islam was "true socialism". Alatas, *Islam dan Sosialisma*, pp. 26–27. For another example of such socialist appropriations of Iqbal, see Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London: Meridian Books, 1956).
132. J.W. Syed, "Implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", pp. 8–9; Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, pp. 57–67; Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 163–64; Iqbal, *Letters and Writings of Iqbal,* edited by B.A. Dar (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967), p. 80; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 137; Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, pp. 8–9.
133. J.W. Syed, "Implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", pp. 7–10; Hamidullah Siddiqi, "Man's Status in the Ultimate Scheme of Things", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 1 (August 1955): 9–11.

134. Hamidullah Siddiqi, "Man's Status in the Ultimate Scheme of Things", pp. 9–11; Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 129.
135. The reference to "raw materials" draws from Iqbal's and Maududi's complex critiques of how the East/Muslims have become subjects in consciousness and sustain the "systems" that colonize through becoming "labour" to "tools". See Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, p. 62; Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 251–58; Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: F. Cass, 1977).
136. J.W. Syed, "Muslim World at the Cross-roads", pp. 7–11. While Soekarno declared at the Bandung Conference that "Colonialism is not dead", this "Spirit of Bandung" was preceded by the South and Southeast Asian postulations of study, *Selected Documents of the Bandung Conference; Texts of Selected Speeches and Final Communique of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 18–24, 1955* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955).
137. E. Rasjad, "Sarikat Buruh Islam Indonesia: The Moslem Labour Union of Indonesia", pp. 11–12.
138. Alatas, "The Islamic State", p. 1; Alatas, Editorial Caption to Roem's "South East Asia Co-operation", p. 8.
139. For an example, see Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, pp. 184–85, 297; *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 133; Maududi, *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, pp. 20–22, 89–90; *Let Us Be Muslims*, p. 4; Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, p. 139; *Javid Namah*, p. 58; *Bandagi Namah*, p. 57; *Islam as an Ethical and Political Ideal* [a lecture delivered in 1908], edited by S.Y. Hashimy (Lahore: Orientalia, n/d).
140. Maududi, "The Spiritual System of Islam", pp. 7–10.
141. Alatas, Editorial Caption to Maududi, "The Spiritual System of Islam", p. 7.
142. Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", p. 196; Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 12.
143. For an example, refer to Alatas, "The Industrialization of Islamic Society", pp. 1–3.
144. Hussein Alatas, "The Mystical Experience of Prophet Muhammad: The Meaning of al-Miraj in the Life of Islam", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 4–5 (November/December 1954): 3.
145. It is pertinent to note that these were not simply anti-Sufi tirades, but sensitive critiques of asceticism that had plagued contemporary Sufism. Indeed, like Iqbal, Alatas regularly declared the "reality" and "value" of mystic experience in *Progressive Islam*; see Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 121.
146. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, pp. v, 131; Iqbal, *Javid Namah*, pp. 67–68; Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, pp. 32–34, 52; von Popp, *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power*, p. 76.
147. Natsir, "The Contribution of Islam to Civilization", p. 3.
148. Ibid., p. 3; Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka*, p. 30; *Keragaman Hidup Antar Agama*, pp. 10–11; J.W. Syed, "Islam and Material Progress", p. 6.
149. Natsir, "Pidato pada Hari Iqbal, 21 April 1953, di Jakarta", pp. 194–96.

150. Hussein Alatas, "Objectivity and the Writing of History: The Conception of History of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Dr Iqbal and other Historians", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 2 (September 1954): 3. Iqbal, a number of *Progressive Islam* contributors such as Alatas, and even Maududi (who largely purged his *tafhim* of mysticism), appropriated the contested narrative of Muhammad's *miraj* to God in its mystical metaphors; these Islamists, however, contrasted the this-worldly "prophet" who physically returned from heaven to transform his religious experience into a "living world-force" against the other-worldly "mystic". F.A. Overing, "Miraj and the Finality of Prophethood", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 1 (August 1955): 11–12. See also Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 23; Adams, "Mawdudi's *Tafhim*", p. 316.
151. See, for example, Natsir, "The Contribution of Islam to Civilization"; M. Natsir, "Abu Hamid Al Ghazali", *Progressive Islam* 1, no. 10 (1955): 3–5; M. Natsir, "Ibn Maskawaih", *Progressive Islam* 2, no. 5 (1955): 12; Maududi, *al-Jihad fi'l-Islam*, p. 44; also, R.D. Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 106.
152. Iqbal, "Islam and Ahmadism [Part II]", pp. 46–47; *Speeches and Statements*, p. 128.
153. Cited from Muhammad Iqbal "Islam and Ahmadism [Part I]", *Genuine Islam* (May 1936), p. 7.
154. Natsir and Maududi also followed Iqbal in elaborating more intellectual critiques of Ahmadiyya prophetology and epistemology. See Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 126, 166. Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, p. 94. See also Iqbal, "Islam and Ahmadism [Part I]"; and "Islam and Ahmadism [Part II]", *Genuine Islam* (June/July 1936), pp. 46–47; Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka*, pp. 7–8, 48-51; *Berbahagialah Perintis*, p. 22. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 129; *West vs. Islam*, p. 309.
155. Maududi, *West vs. Islam*, p. 195.
156. Hussein Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (London: Cass, 1977), pp. 29–30.
157. In defending Maududi's pamphlet, Alatas stated "Dr Iqbal himself had urged the Muslims not to recognize the Qadiani as being a member of their community", Editorial Caption on Maududi's "The Political System of Islam", p. 2.
158. Roem, "South East Asia Co-operation", pp. 3–8; Hussein Alatas, "India and the Intellectual Awakening of Southeast Asia", *Modernization and Social Change: Studies in Social Change in Southeast Asia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972), pp. 151–52.
159. Iqbal, *Bang-e Dara*, p. 95.

9

SHARI'A-MINDEDNESS IN THE MALAY WORLD AND THE INDIAN CONNECTION
The Contributions of Nur al-Din al-Raniri and Nik Abdul Aziz Bin Haji Nik Mat

Peter G. Riddell

In a 2006 article in the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Muhammad Ali wrote that "the patterns of networking between… *ulama* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in 'Indonesia' and those in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Kelantan seem to be similar. *Surau*, mosques, *pondok*, and later *madrasah* served as the major local centres for the transmission of Islamic knowledge."[1] While a general comparison of selected scholars from these two periods might seem random, it is worthwhile considering how different scholars from different periods and geographical locations have been connected to a particular theme. In the context of this volume's focus on Islamic linkages between South and Southeast Asia, this chapter will give particular attention to two figures from very different time periods and contexts, who have made a powerful contribution to Islamic identity in the Malay world: Nur al-Din al-Raniri and Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat. Particular attention will be especially devoted to examining how both scholars were driven by a sense of "Shari'a-mindedness" in pursuing

their respective goals, and the extent to which this mindset was rooted in events and experiences in South Asia.[2]

INTRODUCING THE TWO SCHOLARS

Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658)

Very little is known about the early life of al-Raniri, and scholars depend on the form of his name to deduce something about his background and childhood. The large number of *nisba* elements in his full name — Nur al-Din Muhammad b. Ali *al-Hamid al-Shafi'i al-Ash'ari al-'Aydarusi al-Raniri al-Surati* — point to his origins lying in a diaspora family of the Hamid clan in Ranir (today's Rander[3]) in Gujerat, India.[4] There is some scholarly debate as to whether he was of Hadhrami extraction;[5] what is clearer is that he claimed to be descended from the Quraysh. He was thus a member of an ethnic minority, and may well have been of mixed racial descent himself.

Al-Raniri's educational training drew on Hadhrami links, and was heavily influenced by Sufi thinking. His scholarly mentors included Sayyid Umar b. 'Abd Allah Ba Shayban al-'Aydarusi,[6] a Hadhrami living in India who prepared al-Raniri for the 'Aydarusiyya Sufi order.[7] Al-Raniri himself was to become a key link in the chain between Hadhrami initiates of the 'Aydarusiyya Order, and India.[8]

Al-Raniri frequently travelled beyond India, both to the West and the East. In 1620–21, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. During that visit he also may well have visited the Hadramaut, to maintain contact with the country of origin of either his family (if he was a Hadhrami), or his teacher, Sayyid Umar.[9] However if part of al-Raniri's education focused towards the Hadhramaut to the west of India, there also seems to have been an eastward looking element as well. Al-Raniri's uncle, Muhammad Jilani Hamid, had initially visited the Sultanate of Aceh in the 1580s with the intention of teaching Islamic subjects there, and then spent some time in Mecca to study Sufism before returning to Aceh better equipped to provide instruction in the highly monistic Sufism that was popular in Aceh at that time.[10]

The dearth of sources on al-Raniri's early life means that modern scholars are reduced to speculation on the nature of his initial contacts with the Malay world. It is probable that he had some mastery of the Malay language before his main stay in Aceh from 1637 to 1644. Iskandar postulates that he may have studied Malay with the significant Malay community resident in Gujerat.[11] Naguib Al-Attas suggests further that al-Raniri's own mother may have been Malay.[12] Voorhoeve suggests that he may have practised his Malay with the

Malay community resident in Mecca during his pilgrimage.[13] Both Iskandar and Al-Attas point to a possibility that he spent time in Malaya, probably Pahang, sometime in the period 1621–37, on the basis of various factors: his evident familiarity with the *Sejarah Melayu*, which acts as a source for his work *Bustan al-Salatin*; his detailed knowledge of the kings of Pahang, referred to in *Bustan al-Salatin*; and, his close relationship with Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh, who originated from Pahang. Furthermore, Tudjimah proposes a visit by al-Raniri to Aceh during the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda, ending in disenchantment because of the highly speculative approach to Sufism within the Sultanate at the time.[14]

Al-Raniri's *Bustan al-Salatin* is the key source on his arrival in Aceh on 31 May 1637.[15] The fact that he arrived as a prominent figure is reflected in his rapid appointment as *Shaykh al-Islam* by Sultan Iskandar Thani.[16] Yet his stay was brief. As long as Iskandar Thani was on the throne, al-Raniri's position was secure, and he used it to launch a theological purge of his adversaries, writing prolifically in the process. However, with the death of Iskandar Thani in 1641, his star gradually set. The new Sultana Safiyyat al-Din initially kept him on as *Shaykh al-Islam*, but within three years al-Raniri fell from grace, and he was forced to leave Aceh in 1644, driven out by followers of a new Minangkabau scholar named Sayf al-Rijal, who had himself received much of his educational training in India, at Surat, and who adhered to the *wujudiyya* teachings of Raniri's predecessors.[17] Al-Raniri returned to his native India, where he died on 21 September 1658.[18]

Nik Abdul Aziz (b. 1931)

If we leap ahead three centuries to the second scholar, we find points of connection emerging from some very different contexts. Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat has become one of the key religious and political voices in Malaysia at the turn of the twenty-first century. Born in a village near Kota Bharu in Kelantan in 1931, and boasting a lineage which goes back to the rulers of Kelantan and Patani,[19] he studied the Islamic sciences from his father, Tok Guru Haji Nik Mat bin Raja Banjar. Haji Nik Mat enjoyed a prominent reputation as a religious scholar, having studied under Tok Kenali (Muhammad Yusuf bin Ahmad, 1868–1933)[20] at the Madrasah Muhammadyah.[21] The instruction that Nik Aziz received from his father was supplemented by that of a number of local religious notables in Kelantan and Terengganu. He studied with the famous Tok Khurasan (Abu Abdullah Sayyid Hassan bin Nur Hasan, 1875–1944)[22] at the school established by Tuan Guru Haji Abbas in Terengganu, which is discussed in more detail below.

Like al-Raniri, Nik Aziz received a solid educational training from prominent Islamic scholars in his native environment, and then also travelled to further his education. He spent the period 1952–58 studying in India at Darul Uloom, Deoband, from where he continued to Lahore, and thence to Cairo, where he took Bachelor and Master degrees, majoring in Islamic Law at Al-Azhar University. On his return to Malaysia in 1962, Nik Aziz devoted himself to full-time teaching of the religious sciences and preaching. He was a preacher in Masjid Kampung Pulau, while teaching in the Arabic-language school Maahad Muhammadi in Kota Bharu.[23] In 1963, Nik Aziz married the fourteen-year-old Tuan Sabariah Tuan Ishak, who ultimately bore him ten children (five daughters and five sons). According to Nik Aziz, all his children took Islamic studies as their main subject.[24]

Also like al-Raniri, Nik Aziz saw his religious education as informing broader issues beyond the realm of theology, in particular, issues of society and politics. Soon after his return to Malaysia, he joined the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), and in 1967 Nik Aziz was elected to the federal parliament as member for the seat of Kelantan Hilir, which he retained in subsequent elections until 1986. From this year, his political involvement was focused on the Kelantan state parliament. On 22 October 1990, Nik Aziz was appointed Chief Minister for the State of Kelantan, becoming its fifth Chief Minister, a position which he still held at the time of writing. As further evidence of his commitment to integrating politics and religion, Nik Aziz also functions as PAS *Mursyidul Am* or spiritual adviser, a largely consultative post. Despite a spate of recent health issues Nik Aziz remains active in politics and religious life, and is seen as the leading authority on spiritual and political matters by many Malaysian Muslims.[25]

SOUTH ASIAN CONNECTIONS

Al-Raniri

Al-Raniri's primary theological context was India, in terms of both his childhood education and his adult activity. It was a context characterized by much polemic in his youth, which was a significant factor in the formation of his own approach to perceived orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Monistic Sufis of the *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being) school had greatly influenced the Mughal court in India in the late sixteenth century, especially during the rule of Akbar (r. 1555–1605). However, the rule of Jahangir (r. 1605–27) witnessed the emergence of a new head of the Naqshbandiya order, Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624).[26] He was invited to the Mughal court as assistant to

Chief Minister Abu'l-Fadl, though he later fell from favour and was jailed by Jahangir for one year in 1619.[27] Sirhindi's greatest contribution to Islamic thinking in his time was the development of his *wahdat al-shuhud* (unity of witness) school, which Braginsky distinguishes helpfully from the *wahdat al-wujud* school as follows:

> Contrary to existential monism (*wahdat al-wujud*), empirical monism (*wahdat al-shuhud*) rejects the idea of the essential Union of the Gnostic with God and asserts that this Union is only a psychological state experienced by the gnostic in the course of his ecstatic practices.[28]

Sirhindi targeted Sufis whom he considered inclined to monism, and accused them of downgrading the Shari'a in favour of ecstatic other-worldliness. The *wahdat al-shuhud* school represented Sirhindi's attempt to reconcile esoteric Sufi thinking and practice with the exoteric prescriptions of orthodox ritual and law. His key text, the *Maktubat-i imam-i rabbani*, embodied his attempt to revive orthodox Sunni Islam in order to replace what he saw as the syncretistic religious tendencies prevalent during the rule of Akbar.

Nik Abdul Aziz

Earlier in this chapter, a brief reference was made to the period spent by Nik Aziz in India and Pakistan. But the South Asian connection for the Malay scholar began long before his arrival in the subcontinent in 1952, reaching back to his early studies in Kelantan and Terengganu where he came into contact with Haji Abbas bin Haji Ahmad.[29] Haji Abbas was born in Kampung Bukit Puteri, Kuala Besut, Terengganu, and received his initial education in Pondok Haji Mohd bin Haji Hussein in Kuala Besut. At the age of fourteen he was sent to Mecca for eight years to study, from where he continued on to India to study at the University Al-Jamiah Al-Islamiah in Gujerat, the home region of Nur al-Din al-Raniri. Haji Abbas returned to Kelantan, but after four years went back to India once again in 1938 to study for one year at the famous Darul Uloom, Deoband.[30] His studies completed, Haji Abbas returned to Malaya and became a very prominent figure in the scholarly community. He was a member of the Majlis Ugama of Kelantan, and wrote a pamphlet entitled *al-Qaul al-Haqq* (Statement of Truth)[31] on the topic of *zakat* and *fitrah* taxation.[32] He committed himself to establishing many *pondok* schools during the remainder of his life: Jamiah Diniah in Kuala Besut; Darul Adib Al-Khurasani; Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq (1944) in Jertih, Terengganu; and Pondok Tok Jirin in Terengganu (1953). The Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq figures prominently in the training of Nik Aziz. It was established by Haji Abbas

and Abdullah Haji Ahmad (popularly known as Ustaz Lah India). Both were graduates of Darul Uloom Deoband.[33]

Nik Aziz was one of the first students to enrol in the Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq in 1947 and he received much praise from his teachers during his five years of study at the institution. Haji Abbas was a specialist on *hadith* and Nik Aziz studied this field with him, as well as prominent works of *tafsir* such as *Tafsir Baydawi* and other works. Overall he covered a wide range of subjects: *fiqh*, *tawhid*, *hadith*, *tafsir*, and *mantiq* (logic), which he had studied previously with Tok Khurasan.[34] The South Asian connection related not only to teachers, but to materials as well, as Abdullah Haji Ahmad reported that "at that time, there was not only a shortage of teachers who were proficient in *mantiq*, but books on logic were difficult to find in local bookshops. Books on logic could only be obtained from India at that time."[35] Nik Aziz's period as a student at the Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq was a resounding success, as Haji Abbas and Abdullah Haji Ahmad reportedly considered him to be their most outstanding student. It was, therefore, unsurprising that on graduation, Nik Aziz was encouraged by his mentors to continue his studies overseas.

In 1952, he left for India. The first institution visited was Aligarh Muslim University, after which the young student proceeded to Deoband where he undertook a five-year period of study at Darul Uloom, learning various Islamic sciences from a range of scholars. He also gained experience in teaching while in India, instructing on a part-time basis at several other Islamic institutions.[36] In taking this step, Nik Aziz was continuing a tradition that had developed among Kelantanese scholars, with many of his scholarly predecessors studying at Darul Uloom Deoband, including Haji Nik Abdullah (1900–36),[37] Haji Nik Mahmud,[38] and Haji Nik Muhammad Salleh,[39] all sons of Haji Wan Musa who served as Mufti of Kelantan from 1909 to 1916.

THE DARUL ULOOM CONTEXT

The Darul Uloom is the largest Islamic seminary in South Asia, and considers itself as being, along with Cairo's Al-Azhar University, one of the two principal pillars of Sunni Islamic education in the Muslim world. It was established in 1867 in response to the deposing of the last Mughal Emperor by the British and the perceived decline of Islam. With the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, Darul Uloom became one of the key centres where the yearning for a revived Caliphate flourished.[40] This original spirit of shoring up Islam in the face of its adversaries has continued throughout the institution's ethos to the present day. Indeed, its self-perception of receiving divine blessing in fulfilling its mission is reflected in a statement on its website:

> The blessings (Barakat) of the Darul Uloom and its universal beneficence are indicating that upon this academic institution a special theophany (Tajalli) of divine and prophetic knowledge has cast its light, which regularly continues to attract hearts towards it.[41]

Such was the ethos of the institution in which Nik Aziz enrolled in 1952. But he not only imbibed this spirit of championing Islam against its adversaries, he also absorbed the pedagogical methodologies at Darul Uloom which had been in place since its foundation.

Darul Uloom drew much of its inspiration from the thinking of the eighteenth-century Indian Muslim reformer, Shah Waliullah,[42] who had "aimed to restore the Islamic sciences through *hadith* studies".[43] It also adopted many features of the new educational institutions established by the British, such as division of students in regular classes, attendance registers, and written examinations.[44] The curriculum of Darul Uloom is based on the *Dars-i-Nizami* structure, developed in the seventeenth century, which apportions student attention between the principal Islamic sciences, covering both exoteric and esoteric subjects. However, the *Dars-i-Nizami* curriculum was adapted for the Darul Uloom, with a considerable reinforcing of the study of exoteric subjects, especially *hadith*; whereas the original curriculum focused on the study of the *Mishkat al-Masabih* collection,[45] a further ten collections of *hadith* were included for study in the Darul Uloom curriculum. At the same time, study of logic and philosophy were downgraded in favour of a greater emphasis on study of the Qur'an and *fiqh*.[46] Indeed, Rizvi suggests the Darul Uloom curriculum was heavily anti-Sufi from the outset:

> [Darul Uloom Deoband] became the spear-head [sic] of the revitalization of the "Ulama" in India, but Sufism had no place in its syllabus. It taught the *Rashidiya* on Shi'i-Sunni polemics and *Shams Bazigha* and *Sadra* in philosophy; but neither the *Tahafut al-Falasifa* of Ghazali nor the *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha* of Shah Waliu'llah were included in its curriculum.[47]

Barbara Metcalf implies that Darul Uloom was not as anti-Sufi as Rizvi suggests, favouring instruction in a more "sober" expression of the mystical pursuit.[48] Nevertheless, it is clear that the study of Sufism, such as it occurred, was not as central to the formation of Darul Uloom graduates as was the study of the exoteric sciences.

The upshot was that graduates of the Darul Uloom were likely to be highly literate in the Qur'an, *hadith*, and jurisprudence, and it was equally likely that these aspects of the Islamic sciences would inform their own educational pursuits after graduation. This was clearly the case with Haji

Abbas, whose own specialization in *hadith* greatly influenced the operations of his Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq in Terengganu.

Metcalf makes an important observation about individuals and movements emerging from the Deoband school which will be seen to have direct relevance to Nik Aziz:

> What is perhaps most striking … is the extent to which politics is an empty "box", filled expediently and pragmatically depending on what seems to work best in any given situation… virtually any strategy is accepted that allows the goal of encouraging what are defined as core, shari'a-based individual practice…[49]

In other words, politics works around shari'a, rather than the reverse. This idea will be picked up subsequently.

After graduating from the Darul Uloom, Nik Aziz spent 1958 in Pakistan, where he studied at the University of Lahore,[50] following a course in Qur'anic exegesis with the anti-Wahhabi scholar Maulana Hussain Ahmad al-Madani.[51] From there he continued on to Al-Azhar in Cairo, benefiting from an international scholarship from the Muktamar Islam, funded by the Saudi King Faisal.[52]

SHARI'A-MINDEDNESS, ANCIENT AND MODERN

Having considered the lives and respective South Asian contexts of the two scholars, we will now turn our attention to their activities and priorities in the Malay world. In the process, we will consider the extent to which each was motivated by shari'a-mindedness in pursuing their particular goals. This concept of shari'a-mindedness was proposed by Marshall Hodgson in the following terms:

> The Shari'ah in itself, of course, was far from sufficient to define a whole Islamic culture. Both the Shi'i and the Jama'i-Sunni ulama' carried their concern beyond the law and even the ethics embodied in it to wider reaches of intellectual life. They built especially on the … exact and elegant recitation of the Qur'an, elaboration of Arabic grammar and lexicography, and history not only of the Prophet but of his community. To these they added the newer disciplines that had arisen in connection with the fiqh jurisprudence itself, such as *ilm al-rijal*. All these studies combined to develop a general sense of life and of what mattered most in it which, since it centred in the Shari'a, I call "Shari'a-mindedness".[53]

In coining this term, Hodgson took great care to avoid using it as a means of adjudicating in intra-Islamic debates about relative orthodoxy. Indeed, he

distanced shari'a-mindedness from common understandings of "orthodoxy" by saying:

> because the word "orthodoxy" can be and has been seriously misleading when applied to the particular approach to Islam here indicated, I prefer to use explicitly a phrase referring to the Shari'ah and to its central role in the outlook. Then I can reserve the term "orthodox" for any case where a given position may be regarded as established, either officially or socially – and such a usage will by no means always coincide with "shari'ah-mindedness".[54]

In the context of this chapter, our use of the term "Shari'a-mindedness" is intended to reflect the perception by al-Raniri and Nik Aziz respectively of the necessary centrality of shari'a in the life and worship of their respective Islamic communities. It is not intended to reflect our own judgement on the relative "orthodoxy" of either of our two chosen scholars or of their opponents.

Al-Raniri

Nur al-Din al-Raniri was a man of diverse gifts and abilities, as can be seen from the scope of his writings, which cover theology, Islamic law, *hadith*, Sufism, and history. His varied areas of expertise were facilitated by his language abilities, as he was a polyglot, having various degrees of mastery of Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Malay, and Acehnese.[55] Furthermore, he also had a good sense of different audiences, and adjusted his writing style and content to suit the requirements of a diverse readership, ranging from scholarly specialists to non-specialist lay readers.[56] However, if his own gifts were characterized by diversity, his theological position was not; nor did he warm to others expressing pluralistic viewpoints on the major theological issues of his day. Indeed, most of his writings were, in some way or other, highly polemical. Though the targets of his ire were varied, the principal recipients of his attacks were those whom he classed as the *Wujudiyya*, the ideological cousins of group that had earned the disdain of Ahmad Sirhindi in India during al-Raniri's youth there.

Attacks on the *Wujudiyya* constitute a significant part of al-Raniri's works including: (in Arabic) *Nubdhah fi da'wa al-zill ma'a sahibihi* [A Pulse in the Call of the Shadow with his Companion], and (in Malay) *Hal al-zill* [Concerning the Shadow], *Shifat al-qulub* [Healing of the Hearts], *Asrar al-insan fi al-ma'rifat al-ruh wa al-rahman* [Secrets of Man in the Cognition of the Spirit and the Merciful One], *Hujjat al-siddiq li-daf'al-zindiq* [Proof of the Truthful for the Refutation of the Heretics], as well as his last work written in Aceh, which was completed by one of his students, *Jawahir al-*

'ulum fi kash al-ma'lum [Essences of Sciences in the Revealing of the Objects of Knowledge].

A summary of al-Raniri's objections to *Wujudi* approaches is presented in *Hujjat al-siddiq li-daf 'al-zindiq*. First, he accuses them of a monistic approach which equates the Creator with the created realm. Second, he charges them with arriving at this point through a state of involuntary intoxication. Third, and damningly, al-Raniri accuses these monistic Sufis of using this state of intoxication as a pretext for neglecting their obligations to the behavioural norms of Islamic law, as recorded in the Shari'a. He emphasizes that no circumstances absolve Muslims of their duty to follow the Law, and those who do are deserving of death and fire.[57] In *Jawahir al-'ulum fi kash al-ma'lum,* al-Raniri attributes the perceived errors of the *Wujudiyya* to a misunderstanding on their part of the technical terminology of Sufism and to an imperfect understanding of "the sciences of exegesis and tradition".[58]

In *Tibyan fi ma'rifat al-adayn* (Explanation of Faiths), al-Raniri records a debate between his principal *Wujudiyya* adversaries and himself before Aceh's Sultan Iskandar Thani (r. 1636–41). In response to al-Raniri's accusations, as summarized above, the presiding *ulama* are reported as pronouncing a *fatwa* of unbelief against the accused, who were duly condemned to death, with the sentence being carried out on those who refused to renounce their doctrines. Braginsky suggests that the victims were, in fact, quite few in number.[59]

So the exoteric sciences of *hadith* and *tafsir* stand affirmed in al-Raniri's writings. Though a committed Sufi himself, his concern was to preach a reformed Sufism which allocated due attention to the external requirements of the Islamic faith, by way of ritual practice and observance of the Law. This shari'a-mindedness demonstrated by al-Raniri resembled that of Ahmad Sirhindi in India a generation earlier. Though Braginsky points out that al-Raniri does not provide evidence in his writings of direct familiarity with Sirhindi's writings, he also argues that Raniri's teaching sits well with the *wahdat al-shuhud* school of Sirhindi.[60] It is highly likely that al-Raniri served as a conduit for Indian Islamic doctrines and reformist thinking, and drew on Sirhindi to some extent as a model in developing his own approach to perceived heterodox thinking.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the *Aydarusiyya* to which al-Raniri belonged had strong reformist tendencies. In the words of Azyumardi Azra, this order "strongly emphasised the harmony between the mystical way and total obedience to the *shari'a*. It is also noted for its non-ascetic and activist attitude."[61]Azra argues that Raniri's polemical approach was not an isolated case by an individual with an axe to grind; rather it was consistent with the reformist spirit extending throughout the scholarly networks in which

al-Raniri was involved.[62] So in a sense, whether Sirhindi was the particular trigger for al-Raniri's campaigns in Aceh is not so significant; what is key for our purposes is the fact that in India and Arabia, an anti-*Wujudiyya* reformist spirit was flourishing, and al-Raniri was caught up in this and transmitted it to Aceh.

One final point calls for our consideration on al-Raniri's shari'a-minded polemics. Braginsky suggests that al-Raniri's campaigns were really driven by personal ambition:

> Nuruddin ar-Raniri's hunting for heretics was intended not only, and probably even not so much, to protect the purity of Islam but also to win [his predecessor] Syamsuddin's position in the Muslim community and at court.[63]

It is difficult to confirm or deny this claim. However, on the basis of the literary records remaining from al-Raniri himself, and with little likelihood of new literary materials being unearthed in the future, scholars should give due credibility to the sincerity of al-Raniri's widely repeated concern with issues of Islamic orthodoxy, rather than attributing his sense of mission to a simple quest for personal power and status.

Nik Abdul Aziz

Farish Noor argues that Nik Aziz's time spent studying at Deoband influenced him in two key ways.[64] First, he embraced the Deobandi view of seeing the *ulama* as the primary vehicle for addressing society's ills. Second, he shared the passion for purifying Islam of corrupting accretions from various sources: traditional practices, deviations, and innovations.

Following his return to the newly created Malaysia from India and Egypt in the early 1960s, Nik Aziz devoted considerable energies to diagnosing Malaysia's problems and proposing remedies based on his previous education and experience. The principal obstacles which Nik Aziz has faced, in his view, were the Malaysian national government, dominated by PAS's political competitor among the Muslim Malays: the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). The sharpness of his anti-UMNO polemics has rivalled that of the polemics of al-Raniri against his adversaries in earlier times. Furthermore, the accusation of ignoring the Shari'a has also formed the core argument of both men in challenging their opponents.

The polemical flavour of Nik Aziz's campaign against the UMNO-led government can be garnered from his response to UMNO's prime focus on development plans for Malaysia. Nik Aziz rejects UMNO's preoccupation

with development and modernization, considering that the focus on macro-economic indicators in Malaysian Government Development plans is missing the point about Malaysia's problems. He writes:

> In my opinion, debating about matters of detail will take us nowhere. In my view RMK9 [the 9th Malaysian Government Development Plan] is a matter of detail. It is just a twig, and is not even the stem of the twig. Consider the kind of problem faced by Prophet Abraham. Abraham's question took the form: 'what are you worshipping?'[65]

Having introduced faith to the discussion in the person of Abraham, Nik Aziz directs his audience away from the matters of the secular world:

> In my opinion, Malaysia's problems are … problems of faith and belief… What does Malaysia believe in and who is its God? This is the central issue which cannot be compromised. It needs to be discussed and addressed urgently.[66]

In many of his speeches, he lists the problems facing Malaysia, linking absence of faith with the problems deriving from secularism, and placing the blame firmly at the feet of his UMNO rivals:

> In short, Malaysia nowadays is too fragmented according to issues and problems. The issue of a baby discarded in a water tank. Children born outside wedlock. Fornication. Cohabiting. Alcohol consumption. Print piracy. Apostasy. Claims to prophethood. Insulting the Prophet. The scandal of smuggling of ecstasy pills and drugs of various kids. Black Metal music. Mass attendance at night clubs… All this is a manifestation of the obvious failure of the UMNO/BN leadership… All finds its source in issues of oppression, brutality, bribery, cronyism and injustice which have long faced Islam and the Muslim *umma*.[67]

Having identified the problems facing the nation, Nik Aziz proposes remedies based on several elements. First and foremost among his proposed remedies is the implementation of the Shari'a and opposition to secularism. Throughout his political career, he has reiterated his call for the unequivocal application of the Shari'a to all facets and levels of Muslim society, and his energies have been devoted to this campaign with unswerving commitment.

When PAS came to power in Kelantan in 1990, with Nik Aziz appointed as Chief Minister, he was presented with the opportunity to convert his shari'a-minded commitment from theory to practice. At the time of writing, PAS has been in power in Kelantan for seventeen years, and this has provided Nik Aziz with an ideal laboratory to implement the "shari'a state" to which he is so strongly committed. A raft of Islamic legislation has been passed in

Kelantan by the PAS government. These laws have related to the banning of gambling, discotheques, karaoke lounges, and unisex hair salons, prohibiting the sale of alcohol to Muslims, and requiring official permission to organize carnivals, theatre performances, dances, beauty pageants, and music festivals. In addition, the PAS state government has legislated for gender-segregated checkout counters in supermarkets.[68]

In recognition of PAS's stated commitment to instituting Islamic Law on gaining power federally, the PAS Government in Kelantan passed a bill in November 1993 instituting *hudud*, or Islamic penal codes, in that state. However they could not come into force without approval from the federal government, which has withheld such approval.[69] In matters of polygamy, PAS authorities have sought to follow shari'a injunctions with a policy that viewed polygamy favourably. Commenting on several cases of wives attacking their husbands when the latter declared their intention of taking a second wife, Nik Aziz was reported as commenting that wives should consider the plight of other women "who would become aged virgins until they die because … the men who want them are blocked from marrying them… wives should give their husbands room if they have the financial means and ability to marry more women".[70] However, the PAS government insisted that individual practice should adhere to the letter of Islamic law as determined by the authorities. In June 2002, a senior UMNO official in Kelantan was convicted of unlawful polygamy under the Kelantan Shari'a legal code, and was jailed for four days and fined. He had married a second wife without obtaining the required permission from both his first wife and the religious authorities.[71]

While implementation of Islamic law constitutes the central plank of Nik Aziz's proposed remedies for the ills of Malaysian society, various other measures are proposed as well. Some of these are largely symbolic, and constitute a symbolism that finds its sustenance in episodes from Islamic history or sacred texts. One example of this is the Kelantan government's decision to declare Kota Bahru an Islamic city.[72] If PAS is not yet able to establish Malaysia as an Islamic state (in its terms), this symbolic act serves at least to make a powerful statement of future intent.

A further symbolic element relates to the lifestyle of Nik Aziz himself. We will never know whether al-Raniri saw himself as a man of the people. But there can be little doubt that humility is a key plank of Nik Aziz's public persona. He is famous for his simple lifestyle. He has reportedly handed over 40 per cent of his salary as Kelantan Chief Minister to the state branch of PAS.[73] Furthermore, he has chosen to live in a small house and lead a humble lifestyle instead of residing in the official government residence available to

the Kelantan Chief Minister.[74] This symbolism resonates with the image of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, from the *hadith* and Sira biographical literature, as seen in the following account taken from al-Bukhari's authoritative collection of *hadith*:

> Narrated Amr bin Al-Harith: When Allah's Apostle died, he did not leave any Dirham or Dinar [that is, money], a slave or a slave woman or anything else except his white mule, his arms and a piece of land which he had given in charity.[75]

In another example where modern policy is determined according to *hadith* analogy, Nik Aziz expressed his support for Muslim women being active in sports, saying women could participate, provided they wear Islamic attire such as the headscarf. "As long as navels are not exposed and they are clad in decent Islamic attire, there is no issue. During Prophet Muhammad's era, he allowed his wives to fight on the battlefield."[76]

One of the central planks in Nik Aziz's programme of Islamization is the expansion of Islamic education. On his return to Malaysia, he worked to further develop the Darul Anuar school[77] founded by his father just outside Kota Baru. Located next to the traditional stilt house that remains his home, this school provides instruction to around 1,400 students, many of whom go on to further studies overseas and ultimately become religious teachers after their return to Malaysia.[78] Since PAS came to power in 1990 in Kelantan, there has been considerable growth in numbers of *pondok* and *madrasa* institutions.[79] These include Pondok Darul Ansar Kampung Lalo (1995), Pondok Cabang Empat Talok (1998), Pondok Sri Permai Seligi (1998), and Pondok al-Mutytaqin Tanah Merah (1998). In addition, in 1995, the PAS government in Kelantan established the Centre for Development of Pondok Berhad, and two years later, it established the College of Pondok Darulnaim in Pasir Tumboh. This clearly illustrates the multiplication effect of education originally triggered by major international institutions such as Darul Uloom Deoband.

A further key element in Nik Aziz's strategy is Islamic mission. This takes various forms. In May 2007, Nik Aziz launched Kelantan's month-long *dakwah* campaign at Balai Islam, declaring that it was designed to help those propagating Islam to find new ways to counter the rise of evils in society, such as incest, rape, corruption, snatch thefts, and murder.[80] He stressed that conversion to Islam should not be by force:

> Islam must be embraced voluntarily and sincerely, especially among converts who come to the religion because of sheer belief or those who adopt the faith because of marriage … We cannot force people to enter Heaven. They must do it on their own will. We can guide them but we cannot force… [81]

This commitment to missionary outreach also resonates with one of the key motivations of Darul Uloom Deoband.

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this chapter has certainly not been to undertake a comprehensive comparison of al-Raniri and Nik Aziz, but rather to use a parallel study of the two men as a means of opening up some windows on early and contemporary interactions between Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia.

These two men lived centuries apart, with al-Raniri spending most of his life in India with a short period in the Malay world, and Nik Aziz spending most of his life in the Malay world, with short stints in South Asia. Both also spent a brief period in the Arab Middle East. Both men employed polemical methods in engaging with their adversaries, with their central concerns being that their adversaries were misrepresenting Islam in its true form. Both al-Raniri and Nik Aziz turned to the Shari'a as the solution to the problems they perceived in their Malay world environments. Al-Raniri was concerned with the sidelining of Islamic ritual requirements by his monistic opponents, while Nik Aziz has long campaigned against UMNO, rejecting their emphasis on "Islamic values" in favour of a more literalist application of the Shari'a as the basis of state and society. Barbara Metcalf has made the important observation that Deobandi graduates tend to see politics as merely a function of the Shari'a. In fact, this also applies to both our chosen scholars. While both al-Raniri and Nik Aziz had roles which impacted powerfully on their respective political scenes, both were first and foremost religious scholars, rather than politicians; Nik Aziz's contribution to Malaysian politics has been made at all times through the filter of his faith.

In short, the extent to which their respective South Asian experiences influenced their contribution to the Malay world is considerable. Al-Raniri, the mature scholar, was in no small part shaped by the experiences of al-Raniri, the young man in India, growing up in a society which was experiencing theological conflict between monistic Sufis and shari'a-minded reformists. As a child he witnessed the combative methods of the latter. So when he encountered what he saw as monistic Sufis in Aceh, his shari'a-minded response was inevitably conditioned to some degree by the context of his earlier life. In the case of Nik Aziz, his religious education was eclectic in terms of school and location, shared between Malaya, South Asia, and the Arab world. But the first two of these were linked to the significant Darul Uloom in Deoband, both via his early teachers in Malaya, and his own later education. Deoband is famous for the emphasis it places on the

study of Islamic law and associated disciplines, and the five years Nik Aziz spent at the institution no doubt significantly shaped his own later response to perceived problems in Malaysia.

Notes

1. Muhammad Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", *JMBRAS* 79, no. 2 (2006): 55.
2. This concept of shari'a-mindedness is drawn from the scholarly work of Marshall Hodgson and will be explained in greater detail later.
3. <http://maps.google.com/maps?um=1&tab=wl&client=safari&hl=en&rls=en&q=rander+gujerat>, accessed 27 May 2007.
4. "Indonesia: Literatures", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), III: 1233.
5. Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulama" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: Allen & Unwin, 2004), p. 54.
6. P. Voorhoeve, "Short Note: Nuruddin ar-Raniri", *BKI* 115 (1959): 90.
7. On prominent shayks of the "Aydarusiyya, cf. "Aydarus", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), pp. 780–82.
8. G.W.J. Drewes, "*De Herkomst van Nuruddin ar-Raniri*", *BKI* 111 (1955): 150.
9. S. M. Naguib Al-Attas, *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nur al-Din al-Raniri* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986), p. 4.
10. Tudjimah, *Asrar al-insan fi ma'rifa al-ruh wa'l-rahman* (Jakarta: Penerbitan Universitas, 1961), p. 3.
11. T. Iskandar. *Nuru'd-din ar-Raniri Bustanu's-Salatin Bab II, Fasal 13* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966), p. 2.
12. S.M. Naguib Al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh* (Singapore: Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, 1966), p. 12.
13. P. Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nuruddin ar-Raniri", *BKI* 107 (1951): 357.
14. Tudjimah, *Asrar al-insan fi ma'rifa al-ruh wa'l-rahman*, p. 4.
15. Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nuruddin ar-Raniri", p. 357. For studies of this work, cf. Iskandar 1966; and Anne Grinter, *Book IV of the Bustanu's-Salatin: A Study from the Manuscripts of a 17th Century Malay Work written in North Sumatra* (PhD dissertation, SOAS, London, 1979).
16. Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism,* p. 59.
17. T. Ito, "Why did Nuruddin ar-Raniri leave Aceh in 1054 AH?", *BKI* 134 (1978): 491; Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism,* p. 60.
18. Voorhoeve, "Short note: Nuruddin ar-Raniri", *BKI*, 115 (1959): 91.
19. Farish Noor, "The Localization of Islamist Discourse in the Tafsir of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, Murshid'ul Am of PAS", in *Malaysia: Islam, Society and Politics*, edited by Virginia Hooker and Norani Othman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 205.

20. Muhammad Yusuf bin Ahmad, *Wikipedia*, <http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Yusuf_bin_Ahmad>, accessed 27 May 2007.
21. Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", *JMBRAS* 79, no. 2 (2006): 50–51.
22. Abu Abdullah Sayyid Hassan bin Nur Hasan, *Wikipedia*, <http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Abdullah_Sayyid_Hassan_bin_Nur_Hasan>, accessed 27 May 2007.
23. Muhammad Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", *JMBRAS* 79, no. 2 (2006): 54.
24. "Biography of Tok Guru", Kelantan Chief Minister's website, <http://mbkelantan.tripod.com/biodata/biodata2.htm>, accessed 4 April 2007.
25. He suffered a mild heart attack in July 2004 and underwent surgery, prompting much speculation on his political future. Also, a bout of high blood pressure in 2006 resulted in his being hospitalized. "Who will fit into Nik Aziz's shoes?", *Malaysia Today*, 26 August 2004, <http://www.malaysia-today.net/english/MT100804.htm>; "Annuar: It's time Nik Aziz Retires", *The Star Online*, 15 May 2007, <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/5/15/nation/17722760&sec=nation>; "Nik Aziz May Be Stepping Down", *The Star*, 15 November 2006, <http://bpms.kempen.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9738&Itemid=0>; "Strength of PAS Hinges on Health of Spiritual Leader", *Straits Times*, 5 June 2007, pp. 14; Abdul Razak Ahmad, "76 and Frail, Yet He's Still the One They Want", *New Straits Times Online*, 18 May 2007, <http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Tuesday/Columns/20070508084456/Article/pppull_index_html>.
26. For a rigorous study of this scholar, cf. Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).
27. Francis Robinson, "Sirhindi, Ahmad", *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by John Esposito, vol. IV (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 79.
28. Vladimir Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), p. 749.
29. Alias Hj. Muhammad Noor, *Ada Apa di Serambi Mekah?* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press, 1991), p. 19.
30. "Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Tok Jiring", <http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sekolah_Menengah_Kebangsaan_Agama_Tok_Jiring>, accessed 22 May 2007.
31. Published in Kota Bharu by the Mustafa Press in 1947.
32. Muhammad Salleh b. Wan Musa and S. Othman Kelantan, "Theological Debates: Wan Musa b. Haji Abdul Samad and His Family", *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, edited by William R. Roff (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 168.
33. "Persediaan melanjutkan pelajaran ke India", <http://members.tripod.com/~rostam97/tgmb/tgmb08.htm>, accessed 7 March 2007.

34. For Nik Aziz's own assessment of the significance of Tok Khurasan, cf. Nik Aziz 1983, pp. 34–37.
35. "Persediaan melanjutkan pelajaran ke India", <http://members.tripod.com/~rostam97/tgmb/tgmb08.htm>, accessed 7 March 2007.
36. Ibid.
37. Muhammad Salleh B. Wan Musa and S. Othman Kelantan, "Theological Debates: Wan Musa b. Haji Abdul Samad and His Family", *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, edited by William R. Roff (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 162.
38. Ibid., p. 156.
39. Ibid., pp. 164–65.
40. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1983), Chpt 2, p. 469.
41. "A Brief Introduction", *Darul Uloom Deoband — India*, <http://darululoom-deoband.com/english/index.htm>, accessed 26 May 2007.
42. On this key figure, see J.M.S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi 1703–1762* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).
43. Marcia K. Hermansen, "Wali Allah, Shah," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by John Esposito, vol. IV (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 311.
44. "Deoband Movement [1866–1947]", *Story of Pakistan*, <http://www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp?artid=A025>, accessed 26 May 2007; Metcalf, 1995: 362.
45. Martin Parsons, *Unveiling God* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005), p. 269.
46. "Shah Waliullah And Darul "Uloom Deoband", in Ghazi 2002, available online at <http://zakariyya.wordpress.com/2007/05/06/shah-waliullah-and-darul-uloom-deoband/>.
47. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India,* Chpt 2, p. 263.
48. Barbara D. Metcalf, "Deobandis", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by John Esposito, vol. I (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 362.
49. Barbara D. Metcalf, "'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs", *Social Science Research Council, After Sept. 11*, <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf.htm>, accessed 26 May 2007.
50. "Biography of Tok Guru", Kelantan Chief Minister's website, <http://mbkelantan.tripod.com/biodata/biodata2.htm>, accessed 4 April 2007.
51. Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", p. 54. Maulana Hussain Ahmad al-Madani's anti-Wahhabi views were expressed in his work *al-Shihab as-saqib* where he wrote "Ibn Abdal Wahhab arose in the beginning of the thirteenth Islamic century in the Najd. His thinking was false, and his beliefs were corruptional; on these grounds he opened the way for killing the Ahl as-Sunnah", cf. "Al-Albani Unveiled: Some Observations about the Salafi/Wahhabi

sect", <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/misc/alobs.htm>, accessed 26 May 2007.

52. "Persediaan melanjutkan pelajaran ke India", <http://members.tripod.com/~rostam97/tgmb/tgmb08.htm>, accessed 7 March 2007.
53. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 350.
54. Ibid., p. 351.
55. A. Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri* (Jakarta: C.V. Rajawali, 1983), p. 58.
56. Karel Steenbrink, "Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the Writings of Nur al-Din al-Raniri", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 1, no. 2 (1990): 197.
57. S.M. Naguib Al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh* (Singapore: Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, 1966), pp. 110–12.
58. A.H. Johns, "Malay Sufism", *JMBRAS* 30, no. 2 (1957): 105–106.
59. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature*, p. 647.
60. Ibid., p. 645. Ranir/Rander and Sirhind, the respective birthplaces of al-Raniri and Sirhindi are only 900 miles apart. Though a meeting between the two seems unlikely, Sirhindi's reputation would surely have travelled the distance from his home region in Punjab to Raniri's base in Gujerat.
61 Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism*, p. 62, citing Eaton.
62. Ibid., p. 64.
63. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature*, p. 646.
64. Farish Noor, "The Localization of Islamist Discourse", p. 207.
65. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, "Sila hantar surat segera", *Media Islam*, 9 April 2006, <http://www.ladang.net.my/idimensi/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=695>, accessed 22 May 2007.
66. Ibid.
67. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, "Malaysia, negaraku yang berselerak dengan masalah", *Harakah Daily*, 14 February 2006, <http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=789&Itemid=51>, accessed 22 May 2007.
68. Roger Mitton, "Inside Story Malaysia. Return to Islam", *Asiaweek*, 7 June 1996.
69. It was the original intention of the PAS Government of Kelantan that this Bill should apply to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. PAS authorities in Kelantan announced at the time that non-Muslims could choose whether the Hudud Bill should apply to them or not. Professor Muhammad Hashim Kamali points out that such a choice itself runs counter to the shari'a, and would potentially prove discriminatory vis-à-vis Muslims: Muhammad Hashim Kamali, *Punishment in Islamic Law: An Inquiry into the Hudud Bill of Kelantan* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kajian Dasar, 1995), pp. 18–21.
70. "Polygamy will help aged virgins", <http://www.womenone.org/etcetera_poly.htm>, accessed 18 May 2007.

71. "Malaysian ruling party official sentenced to jail for polygamy", *The Star Online*, 13 June 2002.
72. Azly Rahman, "Come, Study this Islamic city", *Malaysia Today*, 11 March 2006, <http://www.malaysia-today.net/guest-columnists/2006/03/come-study-this-islamic-city.html>.
73. "Biography of Tok Guru", Kelantan Chief Minister's website, <http://mbkelantan.tripod.com/biodata/biodata2.htm>, accessed 4 April 2007.
74. "Nik Aziz Nik Mat", *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nik_Aziz_Nik_Mat>, accessed 25 May 2007.
75. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 51, Number 2, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/051.sbt.html#004.051.002>, accessed 26 May 2007.
76. "The Parallel Universe that Nik Aziz Lives In", 20 February 2007, <http://rantingsbymm.blogspot.com/2007/02/parallel-universe-that-nik-aziz-lives.html>, accessed 18 May 2007.
77. <http://smuda.kelantan.edu.my/sekolah_sejarah.htm>, accessed 26 May 2007.
78. Simon Elegant, "Getting Radical", *Time Asia*, 11 September 2001.
79. Muhammad Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", *JMBRAS* 79, no. 2 (2006): 54.
80. "Nik Aziz: Preachers Must Not Impose on Others", *The Star Online*, 14 May 2007, <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/5/14/nation/17718434&sec=nation>.
81. "Nik Aziz: Preachers Must Not Impose on Others", *The Star Online*, 14 May 2007, <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/5/14/nation/17718434&sec=nation>.

10

THE TABLIGHI JAMA'AT AS VEHICLE OF (RE)DISCOVERY
Conversion Narratives and the Appropriation of India in the Southeast Asian Tablighi Movement

Farish A. Noor

> India gave her mythology to her neighbours, who went to teach it to the whole world. She gave to three-quarters of Asia a God, a religion, a doctrine, an art. She carried her sacred language, her religion, her institutions to Indonesia, to the limits of the known world and from there they spread back …[1]
>
> Sylvain Levi,
> *L'inde Civilisatrice* (1938)

This chapter highlights one aspect of the Tablighi Jama'at, which Masud, Metcalf, and Sikand have described as the biggest itinerant transnational Muslim missionary movement in the world today.[2] The focus is on conversion narratives of Southeast Asian Muslims who have joined the Tabligh, and how these conversion narratives and strategies have employed the trope of India, re-imagined by them and the broader Tabligh as a centre of Muslim learning and pious practice.

Our particular concern here is to demonstrate that in the conversion process of some Southeast Asian Muslims to the brand of normative Islam

embodied by the Tabligh, complex reconstructions and re-appropriations of the image and identity of India have taken place. This appropriation of the image and idea of India is selective and necessarily narrow, but is aimed at creating the bonding capital that binds together not only Muslims within the Tablighi network, but also Muslims from across South and Southeast Asia, via a discourse of a common shared Muslim history and identity. In short, not only has the Tabligh spread its network of activities beyond India to Southeast Asia, but it has also served as a symbolic and discursive bridge between the two regions with India — or in this case, a specific Tabligh-designed image of India — serving as the narrative connection which links the two communities and regions together.

Earlier research on the Tablighi Jama'at in Malaysia and Indonesia tended to focus on its urban presence and the role that the movement has played in the revival of normative Islam in both countries. Most of these studies have emphasized the missionary zeal of the Tablighis themselves, and tended to lend the impression that the transnational transfer of ideas, beliefs, and religious norms was a one-way process that contributed further to the Indianization of the Southeast Asian region and which did not involve a corresponding appropriation of Indian ideas and symbols on the part of the Southeast Asians themselves. In some respects, these studies reiterated the view of Southeast Asians as passive recipients of religious praxis and norms from abroad, and compounded the image of the region as a mere depository of foreign ideas and influences; they are similar in this sense to other academic discourses on Islamization and Arabization in the region. The point that we wish to make here, via recourse to the conversion narratives of the Southeast Asian Tablighis themselves, is that such instances of conversion are rarely ever instances of passive reception bereft of agency and choice, and that in them we find evidence of a local agency of appropriation, selection, and imagining at work as well.

Although in terms of its outlook and approach to Islam, the Tablighi Jama'at movement is widely regarded as being conservative and fundamentalist, it has attracted little attention from the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities because it was viewed as apolitical and harmless. In both countries, the movement managed to attract a considerable following from Muslim blue-collar workers in the cities and was known for its success in reforming drug addicts and petty criminals in particular, ostensibly bringing them back to the right path of Islam. For this reason, the Tabligh managed to secure the tacit support and patronage of the state. The Tabligh's intimate links to the Deobandi school (which later spawned the *Taliban* movement in Afghanistan) gave little cause for concern to most Muslim governments in the 1970s.

Arguably the most important feature of the Tabligh movement is its apparently apolitical outlook and character. In both Malaysia and Indonesia, the movement was seen as quietist and passive in nature, and was conspicuously absent from the political scene. This in part explains the appeal of the Tablighi Jama'at for urban Muslims in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, and accounts for the relative indifference of the governments of the countries concerned towards the group. In the case of Indonesia, the Tabligh movement was tolerated by the Soeharto regime for the simple reason that it was seen as apolitical and non-violent.[3] The movement's claim that it could control and discipline its members was likewise seen as attractive by the Soeharto government and its military backers, coming as it did when the Indonesian government was actively seeking ways and means to blunt the thrust of the Islamist opposition in the country.[4]

While it is largely true that the Tablighi Jama'at has been mostly apolitical in its activities both in South and Southeast Asia, it cannot be said that its origins were entirely outside the realm of the convoluted communitarian religious politics of the Indian subcontinent. The origins of the Tablighi Jama'at go back to the Indian Deobandi movement that was started by Maulana Muhammad Qassim Nanotawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi at the Deoband seminary in 1867. Like the Deobandis, the Tablighis were conservative Muslim fundamentalists who were inspired by the Wahhabi movement from Saudi Arabia. Unlike the Deobandis who were educationists, the Tablighis were missionary-activists who sought to transform Muslim society and bring Muslims back to the path of true Islam.

The Tablighi Jama'at movement was formed in the late 1920s by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi (d. 1944), whose family was closely linked to the Deobandi leadership and its sister school, the Mazahiru'l-Ulum in Saharanpur. The movement was formed at a time of intense rivalry and hostility between Muslims and Hindus in India. The Tablighi Jama'at was actively working against Hindu revivalist groups such as the Arya Samaj (est. 1875) as well as Anglican missionary groups from Britain.[5] From the outset, the movement sought to purify Indian Islam of Hindu and Christian influence, and it tried to win back Muslims who had been converted by the Hindu revivalist movements in the country. For this reason, it was often criticized and attacked by radical Hindu fundamentalist groups who regarded it as a subversive force that aimed to weaken the Hindu community from within.

In order to deflect criticism from its activities, the Tablighi Jama'at rejected the use of violence and opted to remain apolitical. Unlike the Deobandis, the members of the movement avoided direct confrontation with Hindu or Christian groups. Metcalf (2002) notes that the Tablighi Jama'at could be

compared to the Western Alcoholics Anonymous movement that started around the same time: both organizations sought to reform their followers from within and sought to improve their moral qualities while regulating their public behaviour.

Rejecting politics and political activism of any kind, the Tablighi Jama'at movement emphasized instead a peaceful (*sukun*), passive, and gradualist approach. Members of the movement were expected to take part in communal activities, join in their missionary efforts, and to spend one night a week, one weekend a month, forty days a year, and 120 days at least once in their lives with the members of the movement. This is regarded as part of their *jihad* (struggle) for the sake of God and their religion.

The movement spread all over Asia and beyond, and was held together by its close internal linkages and networks. In time it penetrated into many guilds, business communities, and elite networks as well. In most cases, however, its members were ordinary Muslim males from the lower levels of society. The movement has always been able to attract such followers, thanks to its emphasis on the egalitarian ethos of Islam. By the end of the twentieth century, the regular congregations of Tablighis in Raiwind, Pakistan and Tungi, Bangladesh, could attract several million followers, making it the second biggest gathering of Muslims after the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Like the Deobandis, the Tablighis also had an ambiguous relationship with Sufism. They rejected many of the traditional practices and beliefs of the Indian Sufi *tariqas* on the grounds that they were contaminated by alien Hindu practices and ideas, but also sought to use Sufi methods and rituals when it suited them. Metcalf (2002) notes that "among the Tablighis the holiness associated with the Sufi master (*pir)* was in many ways defused into the charismatic body of the community (*jama'at)* so that the missionary group itself became a channel for divine intervention".[6] Like the Deobandis, the Tablighi Jama'at attempted to reproduce the strong master-disciple (*pir-murid*) bonds in the Sufi *tariqas* within their own organizational structure, making it a very strong and intimately-linked organizational network that would be able to straddle enormous geographical distances. The Tablighis also adapted another feature of the Indian Sufi *tariqas*: the (sometimes extreme) veneration of the Prophet Muhammad and his life history. Thus, in Tablighi Jama'at circles, *hadith* and *sira* literature narrating the Prophet's life is of great importance.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Tabligh had arrived in Malaysia, Indonesia, and other countries of Southeast Asia. As we have shown elsewhere,[7] the Tabligh movement spread across Malaysia and Indonesia simultaneously. Initially, at least, this process was aided by the presence of

significant numbers of Muslims of Indian origin who had settled in the region during the era of Western colonialism. Today, however, the Tabligh in Southeast Asia is made up almost entirely of indigenous Malaysians, Indonesians, and other Southeast Asians, and is no longer led or dominated by Tablighis of Indian Muslim background. Over the past two decades the presence of the Tabligh across Southeast Asia has been noted by a number of scholars, and the movement now has a significant and visible presence in places as diverse as southern Cambodia, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines, as well as Malaysia and Indonesia. Furthermore, the number of Tablighis themselves has increased significantly with the grand *Markaz* of Jala in southern Thailand now becoming the fourth largest centre of Tabligh activities worldwide, after the respective centres in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

How does the Tabligh maintain its identity and cohesion in the face of such rapid and significant changes? How does the movement achieve unity in the transmission of its ideas, and coherence of its vision of normative Islam which it seeks to spread and reproduce via its membership and recruitment of new followers? The answers to these questions may lie in the Tabligh's own mode of self-representation and reproduction, the understanding of which requires a closer look at the processes of conversion to the Tabligh itself. This chapter will examine the conversion narratives of Southeast Asian Tablighi Jama'at members to see how they in turn hope to find in the movement the vehicle of self-discovery and recovery that lies at the heart of the movement. We begin with the young Indonesian convert Agus as he goes off in his search for the greater *umma* in India.

NARRATIVE 1: AGUS GOES IN SEARCH OF THE "GREATER UMMA"

One aspect of Tablighi life is the itinerant nature of their activities and their constant movement across the Muslim world. Southeast Asian Tablighis are no exception to the rule and in the course of our research we have come across countless numbers of them moving from mosque to mosque, *markaz* to *markaz* across the Southeast Asian region. This conversion story comes from a young Indonesian convert to the Tabligh named Agus[8] whom I first encountered during my research in southern Thailand.[9] The circumstances of my encounter with Agus were complicated to say the least, but to understand how and why this meeting was as fraught with difficulties as it was, we need to understand a little more about the historical background of the setting itself, southern Thailand.

The four southern Thai provinces of Patani, Jala, Narathiwat, and Satun have been, and remain, strong bastions of Malay-Muslim culture despite the dominant and hegemonizing presence of the Thai-Buddhist state and its security apparatus for more than a century. Furthermore, all four provinces share a common and interconnected history with the four northernmost Malay states of the Malaysian Peninsula: Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis, with obvious cultural, linguistic and historical similarities, and continuities. Since the drawing of political boundaries between the Siamese Kindgom and the British colonial government in 1909, however, the political and economic fortunes of these states have wavered and grown apart: The four northernmost Malay states were later incorporated into what eventually emerged as the Federation of Malaya (later Malaysia) in 1957; while the four southernmost provinces of Patani, Jala, Narathiwat, and Satun would remain part of the Thai nation and were governed by the central government in Bangkok.

Throughout much of the twentieth century, political relations between the central government of Thailand and the four Malay-Muslim provinces of the south were tense at the best of times, and often relations had deteriorated to the point where armed insurgency took place. This was made worse by the attitude of the central Thai-dominated government of Bangkok that pursued several assimilationist policies towards the south, culminating in several political and military campaigns to subdue the Malay-Muslim minorities and to impose the stamp of Thai-Buddhist identity on the nation as a whole. Thai rule over the southern provinces of Patani, Jala, Satun, and Narathiwat meant the forced assimilation of Patani Malays to Thai-Buddhist customs and values. The Malays of Patani in turn clung on to their ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity as the primary means of resisting cultural liquidation and the loss of political and economic autonomy. Though some Thai monarchs such as King Chulalongkorn and King Vajiravudh attempted more subtle modes of accommodation and co-optation, Thai politicians and military rulers such as General Phibun Songkhram (r. 1938–44), who rose to power during the Second World War, were more uncompromising in their methods.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the first attempts to mobilize the Malay-Muslims of the four southern provinces began in earnest, leading to the eventual creation of underground resistance movements that called for autonomy and even independence from Thailand. Complicating matters further at the time was the anti-Communist insurgency being fought out in the jungles of Malaya next door, which meant that the Thai-Malayan border was rife with all forms of clandestine activities, ranging from arms smuggling to the trafficking of pirated goods. It was well known and well documented at the time that across the Thai-Malayan border there existed a constant traffic of Malayan Communists

fleeing from Malaya, and Thai-Muslim insurgents fleeing into Malaya for hiding. In 1959, the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP — National Liberation Front of Patani) was formed by the ex-leaders of the Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya (GAMPAR — United Greater Patani Malays Movement) and the Patani People's Movement (PPM). Its founder was Tengku Abdul Jalal (Adul Na Saiburi), the ex-Deputy Leader of GAMPAR. In 1963, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN — National Revolutionary Front) was formed by Ustaz Abdul Karim Hassan as a result of a split within the BNPP (Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani). The Pertubuhan Perpaduan Pembebasan Patani (PULO — Patani United Liberation Organization) was formed in 1968 (in India) by Tengku Bira Kotanila (Kabir Abdul Rahman).

It was against this backdrop of ethno-nationalist and religiously-inspired political resurgence that the Tablighi Jama'at first came to southern Thailand, carried by a handful of Malayan Tablighis of Indian origin.[10] Having set up their *madrasa*s and *markaz* in the northern Malayan states of Kelantan and Trengganu by the early 1970s, they then turned their attention to the Malay-Muslim provinces of Southern Thailand next door. One of the first places where they began to preach the message of the Tabligh was in the small border town of Golok. Golok today is a somewhat seedy, dingy, unattractive border-crossing town known for its brothels, bars, and nightclubs. On the Malaysian side it is known as a fleshpot that caters to an almost-exclusively male clientele from Malaysia and Singapore. The town is dotted with brothels that operate openly, despite the fact that prostitution is illegal in Thailand. It also has the reputation as the centre for operations for numerous drug and smuggling gangs, and its lawless character is reflected in the environment itself.[11]

It is in the small town of Golok that we find the Markaz Masjid Muhamadiyah of the Tabligh. The Markaz Masjid Muhamadiyah of Golok was the first, and remains the biggest, Tablighi *madrasa*-mosque complex in the town. The historical background of this *markaz* is somewhat similar to that of the Tabligh network in the neighbouring Malaysian state of Kelantan for it is evident that the founding of the Tabligh network in Golok was due in part to the activities of a number of Indian Muslims who resided in Patani.[12] There is also another Tabligh *markaz*, known as Markaz Dua Tabligh, at Golok Dalam (established in 2001), on the other side of town, sitting by the river that makes up the Malaysian-Thai border.

The Markaz Masjid Muhamadiyah is set in an enclosed compound surrounded by medium-height brick walls, and located close to the Golok River which gives the town its name. The mosque itself sits at the centre of the compound, flanked by a multi-storey dormitory that houses male students, as well as classrooms. In the compound of the *madrasa*-mosque,

there is also a considerable number of female students (though all the female students we met were very young, certainly less than ten years of age). These female students were part of the study and playgroup, and did not reside in the dormitory themselves. The *madrasa*-mosque complex can be entered via both the front main entrance as well as the rear entrance, which leads out into a small road flanked by sundry shops, local coffee houses, and automobile workshops. Access in and out of the complex is easy, and there was constant movement of young Tablighis leaving the complex to buy food or make phone calls at the stalls nearby.

The *madrasa* provides rudimentary religious education to train boys. Classes are held in the mosque itself, in typical Tabligh fashion: Groups of boys cluster around a teacher (*mudir/ustaz*) who supervises their oral recitation of the Qur'an. At the mosque we were given samples of Tabligh material translated into the Thai language. As with the case of their counterparts in neighbouring Malaysia, the young members in the *madrasa*-mosque were dressed in South Asian garb that set them apart from the other local Malay Muslims. At the time of our visit, the student body was estimated to be around one hundred boys in all. Female students were allowed to come to the *madrasa* to join in the Qur'an reading sessions, but were not allowed to stay in the *madrasa*'s dormitory.

Most of the boys at the Markaz Masjid Muhamadiyah were local lads from Patani, though we also met with a group of Indonesian Tablighis (six in all) who were between the ages of 17 and 22. Some were from the Jakarta branch of the Tabligh (possibly from their *markaz* at Masjid Kebun Jeruk[13] in Central Jakarta) and all had come to spend the night in order to have their passports stamped at the local immigration centre on the Golok river border crossing. The Indonesian Tablighis probably had no right to remain in Thailand and were taking advantage of the lax enforcement at the immigration check-point to have their passports stamped and visas to Thailand extended. The Indonesian Tablighis had arrived in Golok from the Markaz Besar at Jala, and that evening it was discovered that the Jala *markaz* had been raided by Thai police and security personnel who demanded the passports of all foreigners. The Indonesian Tablighis were worried about their presence in Thailand and warned us not to proceed to Jala. They also informed me about the coming *iztimak* of all the Tablighis in Southeast Asia, to be held at the Pesantren Temboro in Magetan, East Java.[14]

The Indonesian Tablighis were led by their leader (*ketua*) who was a young man named "Agus". Agus was the eldest of the group and was 22 years of age. In the discussions we had, Agus informed me that he was born in Magelang, which is a small town in Central Java, into a typical extended Javanese family. His father was working as a part-time driver (*sopir*) while tending to the small

plot of land owned by them. His mother was a housewife, but had been one of the thousands of female contract workers (TKW — Tenaga Kerja Wanita) who leave the country in search for work in neighbouring ASEAN countries, remitting their salaries back home. Agus's mother had come to work in Malaysia twice before, as a factory worker in a palm oil factory in the southern Malaysian state of Johor, neighbouring Singapore. Agus was the eldest in the family and would normally be in charge of his three younger siblings who were still at school.

During his early teens, Agus had been sent to Jakarta to study and was cared for by his relatives there. By the age of seventeen he had graduated and was looking for work, but could not find any. He described his current work as "part-time" (*kerja sambilan*) and added that he made enough to support himself, but not to send any money back to his family in Central Java. It was during this time that he first came to know of the Tablighi Jama'at who were going from house to house in the Jakartan neighbourhood he lived in, calling on the residents to join them at the mosque to listen to lectures and to learn more about Islam. Within a year, Agus had become a regular follower, but had not undergone any formal conversion process or ritual. (The same observation was made of the other Indonesian Tablighis who claimed that they had never been formally converted to the Tabligh, but who all now considered themselves members of the movement.)

The only formal introduction to the Tabligh took place when Agus was invited to go on a three-day Tabligh tour (*khuruj*, or sometimes also referred to as *tashkil/tashkeel*) at the Masjid Kebun Jeruk in uptown Jakarta.[15] Interestingly, it was only at the Masjid Kebun Jeruk that Agus came to hear the term "Tabligh Jama'at" for the first time. As he put it:

> At the time I did not realize that I was even a member of the Tabligh. We all thought we were just ordinary Muslims and that these sorts of things (going on tour) was normal for good Muslims. I came from a good Muslim family so my family encouraged me to do this, but I did not know what the difference was between the Tabligh and other Muslims.
>
> At the *markaz* [Masjid Kampung Jeruk] I saw some Indians for the first time. They looked different from us, they wore robes and had long beards. They didn't speak *Bahasa* and so we could not speak to them. They slept separately from us, upstairs in the "special area" for foreign visitors.
>
> But some of the other [local] Tablighis could speak their language, and they were always explaining things to them because they [the Indian Tablighis] did not understand. Many of them were not comfortable being next door to the Chinese [in Glodok quarter] because they said the Chinese ate pork and the Chinese girls were not dressed decently.[16]

Thus far, Agus had only been on short three-day tours around the region of greater Jakarta. After doing two tours, he and several of his friends were invited to go further, to visit their fellow Tablighis in southern Thailand. Their first destination was the large Tablighi *markaz* at Jala, which had just been raided by the Thai authorities. Stuck in Golok and unable to return to Jala, they were contemplating what to do next. In the course of the discussion, Agus related how and why he felt comfortable among the Tablighis and what he hoped to gain by being a member.

> Here I am among my friends and we do everything together: we work, travel, study, pray, sleep together and I like this moderate way of life that is good for me. It was with them that I met so many other Muslims from other parts of Indonesia whom I had never met before, and with them I realize how great and big the Muslim *umma* is.[17]

When asked about his plans for the future, Agus stated that he wanted to save money and help his relatives in Jakarta. He had given up with the idea of furthering his studies, but was keen to remain in the Tabligh and to continue their good works ("*amal yang soleh*"). But his main aim at the moment was to save enough money so that he could travel to India and visit the grand *markaz* in Delhi:

> I want to go to India some day because I have been told so many good things about it. When I meet the Tablighis from India, they are all good, pious men and they live the lives of real Muslims, not like us in Indonesia.
>
> In Indonesia we are confused because we are still a secular country. We have the *Pancasila* ideology of Soeharto and the country is full of Christians. In Bali they are Hindu. We are not yet fully Islam, unlike in India where there are many good Muslims and they show other Muslims how to live like good Muslims, like during the time of the Prophet.
>
> Also in India there is much to see from the time of the Muslim Caliphate. The Muslims there were great. When I go to India I want to see all the great monuments of Islam I have seen in the magazines and on TV. I want to see the Taj Mahal, the big mosques, the big palaces. How great we Muslims were then. Here in Indonesia our mosques are not as big as theirs in India. During the time of the New Order [*Orde Baru*] the only things we were proud of were Borobudur and Prambanan. But these were not Muslim. They were Hindu. In India the Muslims still have their big monuments and they are proud of their Muslim heritage, unlike us.[18]

Agus (and his friends) confessed to having very little knowledge of India itself apart from what they had seen on television and read in magazines. In the course of our discussions, we talked about the history of India; the separation

of India and Pakistan, and later Pakistan's division that led to the emergence of Bangladesh; and, the history of Muslims in India and the issues faced by religious minorities in India. Most of them were surprised to learn that the Muslim population of India was smaller than they had imagined, and that the "Islamic" monuments of India such as the Taj Mahal were not strictly religious buildings that served a religious purpose. They were disturbed when we discussed the sectarian divisions among the Muslims of South Asia and the split between Pakistan and Bangladesh, though they were also quick to respond by noting that these divisions were the result of *fitna* (strife) and discord sown in the Muslim community by the enemies of Islam (*musuh ummat Islam*).

Nonetheless, Agus and his friends maintained their stand that India was a more Muslim country than Indonesia because it had provisions for Muslim family law and other legal systems to cater to the needs of Muslims. Neither Agus nor his friends were aware of the fact that under India's legal system, civil marriages were allowable for Muslims who wished to marry non-Muslims, or even Muslims who preferred to marry under civil law.

In the discussions we had, Agus reiterated his belief that the Tablighis from India represented a "purer" form of Muslim piety compared with the "lax" practice of Islam among the Indonesians who was soft (*luwes*). He spoke highly of their commitment to Islam, which he found in their willingness to leave their families to go abroad on mission, and their ability to adapt to the harsh conditions of life faced by itinerant missionaries who are often forced to sleep in humble mosques (often on the floor) and eat whatever is given to them. Agus's search for an authentic Islam untainted by elements of syncretism, secularism, and urban consumerism thus brought him closer to India which he regarded as a "Muslim land" that was somehow free of such un-Islamic influences. This persists, despite the fact that India's image in Indonesia and the rest of Southeast Asia is framed by the contemporary phenomenon of Bollywood pop culture above all else.

Thus it came to pass that for the young Agus, who had been transplanted from Central Java to Jakarta, the path to "pure Islam" and association with the greater Muslim *umma* was granted by his joining the Tabligh fraternity and entertaining the hope that one day he will be able to make the journey to the grand Tabligh *markaz* of Nizamuddin in Delhi. Agus's conversion narrative is one that is replete with the theme of loss and recovery, and the search for authentic roots and beginnings, as well as the yearning to belong to a wider community of the faithful. It is interesting to note that while Indonesia's own Islamization process has taken on a more Arabic flavour and appearance, thanks to the involvement of Arab donor agencies and educational

foundations such as Persis[19] and al-Irshad[20] that were formed at the beginning of the twentieth century, the path that Agus had chosen for himself is one oriented more towards South Asia rather than the Arab world.

Agus's conversion narrative is by no means unique, for many converts are invariably drawn to experiences and demonstrations of piety that are visible and can be easily incorporated into a personal biography and micro-history as well. In Agus's own account the idea of India has been sifted, recontextualized, and reappropriated to suit the needs of a personal quest for fulfilment and identity. Though his own account of an India he has never visited remains stereotypical at best, it nonetheless serves as an instrumental fiction that is both coherent and understandable within the confined logic of the Tabligh universe he has chosen to inhabit.

Our next conversion narrative comes from a Malaysian convert to the movement who likewise had never been to India prior to his conversion and who had grown up as a fully integrated Malaysian citizen all his life. The difference in this second narrative is that it comes from a Malaysian whose family was of Indian origin, and thus the Tabligh here functions not only as a bridge to a wider Muslim community, but also as an entry point for a personal rediscovery of India and a return to his roots. We now turn to Dr Haydar Ali in his search for an Indian homeland he had not seen.

NARRATIVE 2: INDIA RETURNS TO REMIND DR HAYDAR OF HIS ROOTS

Agus was interviewed in the Tabligh *markaz* of Golok in the Thai border town that straddles the Thai-Malaysian frontier. As was mentioned above, the spread of the Tablighi Jama'at across southern Thailand was originally the result of the missionary efforts of a band of Malaysian Tablighis who had taken their zeal across the border to reconvert the Malay Muslims of Patani, Jala, and Narathiwat to their own brand of Islam. Among those who took part in these early missionary trips and tours was none other than Dr Haydar Ali, who also happens to be the founder of the Tabligh movement in the Malaysian state of Kelantan.

Dr Haydar's conversion narrative is unique in many respects as it happens to be the conversion story of a Malaysian of Indian origin. However it is also replete with many of the same themes highlighted in the discussion of Agus's conversion narrative above. Dr Haydar Ali Tajuddin bin Fateh Muhammad and his brothers, Salahuddin Ali and Kamil Ali, were the first converts to the Tablighi Jama'at in Kelantan and their family is of Indian Muslim stock. Their family roots go back to Punjab and northern India/Pakistan and the

Alis are one of many Indian Muslim families to have settled in northern Malaysia/southern Thailand. There is a substantial Pathan community in the states of Kelantan (in Macang), Trengganu (in Jertih), and Patani (in Golok, Jala, and Patani). A majority of the Pakistanis/North Indians in northeast Malaysia and southern Thailand today are of Pushtun origin.

The history of the Haydar family reads like a textbook account of the migration of the Indian Muslims to Malaya during the colonial period: Dr Haydar's grandfather (on his mother's side), Baharam Khan, was an Indian Muslim who originally came from northern India and migrated to British Malaya as a trader. He was born in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) in what is now Pakistan and came to Southeast Asia as a cloth trader and merchant.[21] Dr Haydar claims that his family's burial site is in Multan, Pakistan, and that the family can trace its genealogy back to the *sahaba* (companions) of the Prophet Muhammad. The family's name is al-Qureshi. Like many Indian Muslims in Patani and Kelantan at the moment, the Haydar family was engaged in the trade in cloth and spices, and formed a business bloc of their own. They had enough funds to build mosques as well as trading guilds and cooperatives of their own.

Dr Haydar's grandfather first settled in Kelantan and later transferred his business activities to Narathiwat, Patani in southern Thailand. He was well respected by the Kelantanese and Patani Malays and his position and status as a local merchant meant that he had close business links with the local community as well as some economic clout in local affairs. The fact that he conducted his business activities in both Kelantan and Patani meant that he was constantly moving between the two Malay states and had established local contact networks in both localities. Baharam Khan traded and worked in Kelantan during the time when Maulana Khurasan was teaching religious studies in Kota Bharu. It was Maulana Khurasan, along with other Pathans such as Baharam Khan, who collected funds for the construction of the original Pakistan Mosque of Kota Bharu.[22]

Dr Haydar's father, Fateh Muhammad bin Hillal Muhammad, was an Indian-Muslim who entered the British colonial service and served as an inspector of the Malaysian Special Branch of the Royal British Malayan Police Force (RMPF) in the 1930s. Fateh Muhammad died after the Second World War and was the first member of the family to be born in Malaysia (then British Malaya). It is important to note that both Dr Haydar's grandfather's (Baharam Khan) and father's (Fateh Muhammad bin Hillal Muhammad) lives and choice of careers were in keeping with the racialized social order of the colonial period. Indian Muslims were generally confined to the area of trade and commerce, and quite a number of Indian Muslims from the Punjab or

the Northwest Frontier Province were recruited into the police and armed forces of the British colonial government.

Dr Haydar Ali and his brothers, Kamil Ali and Salahuddin Ali, were all born in Malaysia, and were thus third-generation migrants. In their youth, all of them received mainly secular education and training, and had no exposure to the Tablighi Jama'at or other schools of Islamic revivalist thought and praxis. Dr Haydar did not even speak Urdu, though he speaks fluent Malay with the typical northern Malay dialect of Kelantan. Following his (secular) studies, the young Haydar proceeded to higher education where he took up medicine as his discipline. After the completion of his medical training, Dr Haydar volunteered to serve in the Malaysian Armed Forces (in the National Service) between 1971 and 1973 as an army doctor. He rose to the rank of captain, and in 1974, left the forces and retired from army service. His stint in the army and his role as an army doctor would suggest a secular outlook and background.

By 1974, Captain (retired) Dr Haydar Ali was clearly a well-established figure in Kelantan, whose stint in the army and whose family history marked him and his family out as Malaysian Indian Muslims who — though belonging to an ethnic minority — were respectable figures in their community. His was a typical success story of a migrant family who had come to Malaysia and established themselves as active, respectable citizens in the country. In June that year, Dr Haydar negotiated with a local bank in Kota Bharu in order to secure a loan for a private clinic he wished to build in the town. On securing the loan, Dr Haydar was about to set up his own private clinic when his plans were interrupted by developments in Kuala Lumpur. What happened next is perhaps the most fascinating episode in the life of the man who was destined to become the founder-leader of the Tablighi Jama'at in Kelantan. Furthermore, it is a singular event that explicitly demonstrates the workings of a meta-narrative of identity and cultural continuity that blends together elements of the mystical, supernatural, and geopolitical into a coherent discourse of personal identity and purpose.

According to Dr Haydar, his brother Salahuddin Ali contacted him from Kuala Lumpur and asked him to go to the capital to meet with a Tablighi Jama'at delegation that had come from Bangladesh. What follows is Dr Haydar's own account of what happened:

> At first I did not want to go to Kuala Lumpur. I did not know who or what the Tabligh were and I had never heard of them before. I did not want to get involved with them, or go to see them, as I had my own work to do and was busy with setting up my own clinic here in Kota Bharu. I had secured my loan and everything was set.

> But then the night before I was meant to open my clinic, I had a dream: I saw two men who approached me, wearing green turbans. One had a white beard and one had a black beard. They came to me in my dream and invited me to India.
>
> I did not know what to think or make out [sic] of the dream I had. The next day I got up in the morning as I usually do. I was ready to open my clinic and I went to the new office in Kota Bharu to meet my bank manager who was supposed to hand me the keys. It turned out that he somehow lost or forgot the keys somewhere, and so I could not open the clinic that day.
>
> I stood at the door of my clinic, but could not go in as nobody had the keys and they were nowhere to be found! I called my brother in Kuala Lumpur to ask what this meant, and I resolved to go to Kuala Lumpur to see him and meet the members of the Tabligh.

In Kuala Lumpur, Dr Haydar met members of the Tabligh for the first time. The delegation had come from Bangladesh and the members were conducting their tour across Southeast Asia. Prior to this meeting he had no contact whatsoever with the group, and as he pointed out himself, did not even know who or what they were. Dr Haydar met the members of the Tabligh and they entered into a long discussion about religion, and the purpose and meaning of life. He was told that some of the members of the delegation had already left, but that they wanted him to join them and follow them back to India. Dr Haydar was duly converted and joined the Tabligh, and agreed to join them on their return journey to India.

He made his first trip to India in July 1974, and the group ended up at the Tabligh's Nizamuddin *Markaz* in India. Here, Dr Haydar stated that he met one of the two men he saw in his dream. In his words:

> It was there [at the Nizamuddin *Markaz*] that I met the man I saw in my dreams who I did not get to see in Kuala Lumpur. It turned out that he was Maulana Luthfur Rahman from Bangladesh. It was Maulana Luthfur Rahman who[m] I saw in my dreams and it was he who told me that I would go to India.
>
> Maulana Luthfur then took me to see the Hadratji, the Grand Emir of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, who was there at Nizamuddin. All this took place at the Banglawali Masjid, Nizamuddin, in India in July 1974. It was then that I really became a member of the Tablighi Jama'at.

From Nizamuddin, Dr Haydar went on his first tour with the Tabligh across India. Among the group was Ustaz Salleh Penanti (from Bukit Mertajam) who was also from Malaysia. They journeyed to Shahranpur, to visit the first

madrasa of the Tabligh's early leader Maulana Zakaria. From Shahranpur, they journeyed on foot and by road from mosque to mosque until they finally returned to Nizamuddin.

After one month of travel, Dr Haydar returned to Kelantan and opened his clinic in Jalan Temenggung in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This was in late July/early August 1974. Dr Haydar, therefore, began his career as a doctor in Kelantan at the same time that he became the founder-leader of the Tabligh in the state. The Tablighi Jama'at was introduced to Kelantan by Dr Haydar and his brothers around August–September 1974. Prior to that, the Tabligh had not taken root at all in the state and it is only now that the precise date of the arrival of the movement in Kelantan has been firmly established, as well as the particular circumstances that occasioned its arrival there. The account of the arrival of the Tablighi Jama'at in the neighbouring state of Terengganu to the south of Kelantan, which was related to us by Dr Haydar himself, places the date of the arrival of the movement several years earlier, though the circumstances of the movement's arrival and establishment there are equally coloured by highly specific and unique factors.

The conversion narrative of Dr Haydar is rich with many cryptic devices and allusions that could be read psychoanalytically, but for our purposes here, it suffices to highlight some of the most outstanding elements. Apart from the traces of the supernatural and other-worldly, Dr Haydar's story is likewise littered with references to India as the home of an authentic, pure Islam that is somehow uncontaminated by un-Islamic influences. His passage to India serves the dual purpose of bringing him closer to the Muslim community that his secular education and upbringing had alienated him from, while at the same time reminding him — a third-generation Malaysian migrant — of his long-lost (and forgotten) Indian roots.

For both Agus, the Indonesian, and Dr Haydar, the Malaysian, the Tabligh Jama'at is as much a brotherhood of pious Muslims as a vehicle for the return to an authentic Islamic piety and religious life that is bound together within a hermetically sealed discourse of its own. Though the symbols, tropes, and metaphors that make up this discursive universe are drawn from a gamut of (sometimes unrelated) sources, the discourse itself remains coherent and intact and serves both of them well. Again, what is unique about these Tablighi conversion narratives is how they pose India as the gateway to a greater Muslim *umma*, as well as a truer, purer, and authentic understanding and praxis of Islam.

While much has been written about the role of Arab-oriented conversion and reconversion strategies in Asia and Southeast Asia in particular, relatively little attention has been paid to the equally important role that has been played

by India and Indian Muslim movements such as the Tablighi Jama'at in the process of Islamic revivalism in other parts of the world. True to its calling, the Tabligh has proven to be a transnational movement that bridges political as well as geographical boundaries, and here it can be seen as a discursive tool or vehicle for the fulfilment of personal quests for piety and self-realization as well. Most importantly, the Tabligh serves as a crucial bridge that spans the Indian Ocean and brings South and Southeast Asia together, albeit via a medium of a commonly shared religiosity that is confined to a community of rather conservative and puritan Muslims.

THE APPROPRIATION OF INDIA IN THE SYMBOLIC ECONOMY OF TABLIGHI CONVERSION NARRATIVES

The small sampling of Tablighi conversion narratives is not, and should not be taken as, exemplary or exhaustive in any way. They clearly represent only a small fraction of the manifold tales of conversion that circulate in the discursive economy of the Tablighi community. That said, we have chosen to highlight these two narratives in particular for a number of related reasons:

First, both narratives recount the personal conversion process of two distinct individuals who share only the most general biographical details and personal characteristics. Both of them happen to be citizens of Southeast Asian nations (Indonesia and Malaysia respectively) and both of them happen to be local Southeast Asians who had never been to India before, and for whom conversion to the Tabligh marked their initial contact with India and South Asia more broadly. It should be noted that in both cases, the appearance of India that looms large in their personal accounts of conversion is discursively constructed and it is evident that much of what makes up their personal and subjective imaginings of India has been drawn from popular sources such as tourism advertisements, Indian pop culture, and the Tabligh's own discursive representation of itself. Theirs is an India that is wholly imagined and imaginary, yet by now we should be aware of the fact that an imaginary construction of the *Other* is as real and valid for the individual who imagines it. The imagined community that makes up the global Tabligh fraternity is and remains a discursive imaginary construct and as such is held together by the very same discursive glue that shapes and determines the conviction, beliefs and career trajectory of its members as well. Seen in this light, the imaginary construction of India as the home of the Tabligh movement and the fountainhead of an authentic, pure Islam as presented by the Tablighis, is simply the next logical step in the formulation of the Tabligh's self-representation.

Second, the processes of networking and communication across the Indian Ocean have not, as it is sometimes described, been an entirely one-way process with a fixed trajectory and destination. In recounting the historical spread of the Tabligh to Southeast Asia, we need to restate the obvious historical fact that the movement was originally founded in the Indian subcontinent and how this accounts for the distinctly South Asian "feel" to it. Yet, as we have tried to show in the conversion narratives above, the actual process of conversion to the Tabligh also involves a deliberate, conscious, and selective appropriation of the ideas, symbols, and tropes of India and Indian Islam on the part of Southeast Asian Muslims who seek to locate themselves in the Tabligh's discursive and symbolic universe to which they have converted to. Thus one cannot simply state that the conversion of Southeast Asians to the Tabligh movement is a case of passive conversion (if indeed there can even be such a thing as passive conversion at all), without the element of rational agency and choice.

Third, the fact that India has been selectively appropriated by the Southeast Asian converts raises questions that have been raised elsewhere by Ronald Knox, namely, how and why such processes are aided and abetted by a selective appropriation of common themes and symbols that may point to a poverty of faith and ideas in the first place.[23] The conversion narratives recounted above may be criticized on account of their simplistic and deliberate selection of tropes and symbols that have systematically narrowed and even impoverished the rich history and culture of India, to the point where the vast and complex multicultural history of India has been sidelined to the extent that India appears only as the homeland of Muslims. Obviously such a view of India does not correspond to the reality of Indian history that far exceeds the confines of the Tabligh's imaginary universe, and it, in many ways, distorts India's past as much as it does the present. This, however, misses the point that we have been trying to make here, which is that the process of communication, interaction, and networking across the Indian Ocean on the part of South and Southeast Asian Muslims has been one where agency and choice have been involved on both sides, even if that agency has been expressed in terms of a deliberate and sustained distortion of India's past and present to fit into the comfortable (though admittedly narrow and exclusive) world of the Tablighis themselves.

Any objection to this process on the grounds that it mistakes and distorts the reality of India would miss the point that what is going on in this conversion process is something simpler and yet more effective: That Southeast Asians who convert to the Tabligh have appropriated, and are appropriating, the idea and symbols of India as a means to get closer to what

they regard as the heartland of the Muslim *umma*, where the very idea of political boundaries and the identity of nation states (in this case, the state of India) have been superceded by something bigger altogether. The idea of India that figures in the conversion narratives of the Southeast Asian Tablighis is necessarily an impoverished one, but that does not prevent or hinder the conversion process itself.

Nor is this conversion process guided by a desire to find the "truth" about India, but rather about "Islam". The Southeast Asian Tablighis' imagining of an authentically Muslim India that remains uncluttered by its intimate connections to and with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity is, therefore, obviously fictional, but as an *instrumental fiction*, it serves well as a vehicle for conversion and has provided the necessary bonding capital that helps bridge gaps (both cultural and geographical) across the Indian Ocean.

Furthermore, as other studies of Islamic revivalism in Southeast Asia have shown, this selective appropriation of Indian history differs little from that of Arab-Muslim identity, culture, and history on the part of other Southeast Asian Muslims, whose experiences of faith renewal have been accompanied by similar instrumental adoptions and appropriations of Arab dress, language, and customs — all intended to hasten their process of renewal and reinvention, and bring them closer to what they too see as the authentic Islam they seek.

One may object to such conversion strategies on the part of Southeast Asians on the grounds that it affords them the licence to indulge in what might be described as a "reversed Orientalism", with Southeast Asians adopting and adapting to the lifestyle of Indian Muslims — to the point of donning Indian Muslim dress, adopting their food and customs, and engaging in lifestyle theatrics — in their quest for a Muslim authenticity. But, we cannot simply dismiss this quest as a search for costumes and gimmicks. The world of the Tabligh may be India-centric and narrowly essentialized at the same time, but it is a lifeworld that is every bit as real and authentic for those who have chosen to live in it, and one that has become a significant element in contemporary configurations of a global Islam.

Notes

1. Sylvain Levi, *L'inde Civilisatrice: Apercu Historique* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1938), p. 30.
2. See Muhammad Khalid Masud, ed., *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Trans-national Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Barbara D. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis and Talibs", *ISIM Papers IV* (Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), 2002); Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and*

Development of the Tablighi Jama'at 1920–1990: A Cross Country Comparative Study (Ph.D thesis, University of London, Department of History, 1998); Yoginder Sikand, "The Fitna of Irtidad: Muslim Missionary Responses to the Shuddhi of the Arya Samaj in Early Twentieth Century India," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1997), and Yoginder Sikand, "Arya Shuddhi and Muslim Tabligh: Muslim Reactions to Arya Samaj Proselytisation 1923–1930", *Sikh Spectrum*, Issue No. 16, Delhi, May 2004. (See also <http://www.sikhspectrum.com/052004/hindu_ muslim_ys.htm>.)

3. Farish A. Noor, "Salafiyya Purists in the Land of Shadow Puppets and Hindu Temples: The Tablighi Jama'at in Indonesia", Paper for the Wissenschaftliche Konferenz zur gegenwartsbezogenen Forchung im Vorderen Orient (DAVO Congress), Hamburg, 20–22 November 2003.
4. The arrival of the Tablighi Jama'at in Indonesia coincided with the ascendancy of the Soeharto regime that was then backed by the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI, later TNI) and a number of Western-educated technocrats such as B.J. Habibie, as well as charismatic local elites such as Sultan Hamengku Buwono of the court of Jogjakarta. From 1966 to 1998, President Soeharto presided over the reconstruction of Indonesian society and its economy in the wake of the turbulent Soekarno era and the bloody anti-communist purges of 1965. Under Soeharto, the Indonesian army was given the responsibility to maintain law and order and ensure the territorial integrity of the state. Led by men such as General Benny Moerdani, General Ali Murtopo, General A.M. Hendropriyono and others, the Indonesian military elite sought to control and eventually eliminate what they regarded as an increasingly dangerous security threat to the country: the rise of political Islam. The Soeharto era witnessed the rise of authoritarian politics in Indonesia, which was accompanied by the depoliticization of Indonesian society. The Islamist parties of Indonesia were forced to merge together into one loosely-assembled bloc, known as the Parti Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, or Development and Unity Party) and were no longer allowed to use ostensibly "Islamic" symbols and slogans in their political activities. It was during this time that Indonesian Islamist intellectuals and activists began to call for a non-political approach to Islamization in Indonesia and the inculcation of Islamic *values* (as opposed to Islamic *politics*) in Indonesian public life. These new Islamist movements and intellectuals were predominantly concerned about the question of Islamic normative culture and cultural politics, and in many cases, their own critiques against the Soeharto regime was couched in terms of a culturalist (as opposed to economic-structuralist) discourse that posited the view that the ills of Indonesian society could be remedied if Islamic values and norms were further inculcated into Indonesian public space and political life. It was during this period that the Tablighi Jama'at began to make its presence felt in the urban space of Indonesia, which at the time was already a heavily contested arena with numerous actors and agents competing for their share of public attention and support. During the 1970s the Tablighi Jama'at began to

engage with the members of Indonesia's urban under-classes, hoping to win the support and membership of the urban poor. Its primary constituency, as was the case in Malaysia, was the urban poor and under-represented. Its members were mostly young Indonesian boys in their teens to their late twenties. The fact that all of its members were males probably made the movement seem more attractive to the ruling elite, who were understandably worried about the growing number of unemployed and frustrated young men in the urban centres. See Noor, "Salafiyya Purists", pp. 8–12.

5. See Yoginder Sikand, "Arya Shuddhi and Muslim Tabligh"; R.K. Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement in India: A Study of its Socio-Political Dimensions* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1990); J.F. Seunarine, *Reconversion to Hinduism Through Shuddhi* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1977).
6. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism", p. 11.
7. Farish A. Noor, "Pathans to the East! The Historical Development of the Tablighi Jama'at Movement in Kelantan, Trengganu and Patani and its Transnational Links with the South Asia and the Global Islamist Revivalist Movement", *The Journal of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007): 7–25.
8. Not his real name. "Agus" was in southern Thailand as part of a Tabligh delegation that was stranded between Jala and Golok, and as we shall show below, he was unable to return to Indonesia due to visa problems, and hence requested that his identity be kept secret.
9. This fieldwork was carried out in mid-2004 and we would like to thank the following for their kind assistance during our research: Dr Haydar Ali Tajuddin bin Fateh Muhammad, Nik Rashidi Nik Hussein, Pak Nik Hussein, Mat Golok, Ustaz Hasan Sobri, Ustaz Abdullah Sulaiman, Ustaz Maulana Muhammad Abdul Rahman, Ustaz Fauzan Fatani, Zul Mohamad, Kamil Ali Tajuddin bin Fateh Muhammad, Dr Hatta Ramli, and Don Pathan.
10. Noor, "Pathans to the East!".
11. My research in Patani was hindered by the deteriorating security situation and the lack of a coherent policy on the part of the Thai government and security forces when dealing with the problem of militant groups in the region. Recent Thai government attempts to win Patani Malay-Muslim support by investing in mosque projects have met with a hostile response. Prior to the killing of 113 Patani Muslims on 28 April 2004, the local Thai authorities announced a 28-million-baht project to restore the Krue Se mosque near Patani. The Krue Se mosque restoration project also met with strong local opposition due to its historical significance for the Patani Malays who see it as a landmark monument marking the arrival of Islam and the Islamization of Patani. The local community leaders argued that the restoration would have led to the destruction of the original mosque and its replacement with another modern Arab-style mosque along the lines of the Masjid Jame' Patani. Local leaders mounted a protest against the move with significant local support. Following the crackdown on militants on

28 April, local witnesses claimed that Thai soldiers defiled the compound and interior of the mosque. Locals claimed that Thai soldiers even urinated on the copies of the Qur'an in the mosque and that the insurgents were killed in the building itself, causing damage to its structure and leaving traces of blood and dead bodies in and around the mosque. This made the situation even worse following the event. Bangkok has earmarked 300 million baht for long-term (10-year) investment into the region, with the aim of providing infrastructural, logistic, and communications development and support to the South. Many locals claim that this may lead to further destruction of Patani-Malay sites of historical significance (such as the Krue Se mosque), as well as destruction of the old *madrasa* educational system and network.

12. For a fuller account of the historical development of the *markaz* and the Tablighi network in Golok, see Noor, "Pathans to the East!".
13. See Noor, "Salafiyya Purists".
14. We were informed by the Indonesian Tablighis that between 6–8 August 2004, there would be a major gathering (*Iztimak*) of the Tablighi Jama'at at the Pesantren Temboro, Magetan, in East Java. At the *Iztimak* of the Tabligh in Magetan, Tabligh representatives from all over Southeast Asia were to meet to discuss their future plans. The *Iztimak* was to end on 9 August 2004 with a major council *shura* that was to elect 3,000 Tabligh members who would be given the task of spreading the message of the Tablighi Jama'at all over the ASEAN region. We were told that in 2003 the same meeting elected 1,500 Tablighis to carry on their work in the various countries of Southeast Asia. It was discovered that this gathering in 2003 was aided by elements of the Indonesian government, the Indonesian Islamist parties, and the Indonesian army. The Indonesian government provided a 50 per cent discount for local flights and transport costs to the meeting, plus basic necessities such as water and food. The Indonesian army and BIN (Badan Inteligen Negara/National Intelligence Agency) of Indonesia provided security and escorts, and the Indonesian army even provided Hercules cargo planes to fly Tabligh members from the outer island provinces to the *madrasa* at Temboro.
15. The Masjid Kebun Jeruk is located in uptown Jakarta next to the predominantly Chinese quarter of Glodok, which also happened to be one of the areas badly damaged during the anti-Chinese race riots that erupted all across Indonesia in mid to late 1998.
16. "*Masa itu saya masih enggak tahu apanya Tabligh itu. Kok kita semua orang Islam, ummat Islam bukan, dan merantau begitu saya rasa biasa saja, santai saja, bagi orang Islam yang lain. Tapi keluarga saya bilang kita orang Islam yang soleh, dan mereka bilang pada saya kerja begitu memang urusan orang yang soleh. Tapi saya masa itu tidak tahu bedanya dari Tabligh dan orang Islam yang lain. Di sana (markaz Kebun Jeruk) saya ada lihat orang Tabligh dari India. Itu kali pertama bagi saya. Lucu sekali, mereka berbeda dari kita, pakei jubbah, janggut dan kumisnya panjang. Tapi mereka nggak bisa cakap bahasa (Indonesia), jadi kita nggak ngobrol sama mereka. Makan-tidur mereka di lantai atas, yang khusus bagi*

pelawat asing. Itu memang "spesial" bagi mereka. Tapi gue lihat ada Tabligh kita yang bisa ngobbrol sama mereka. Mereka tidak senang di sana, tinggal di Masjid itu, kerana mereka bilang ada orang Cina yang makan babi dan perempuan Cina pakaiannya tidak sopan."

17. "*Di sini saya bersama teman-teman kalian, dan semua kita uruskan bersama; kerja sama, jalan sama, mengaji sama, solat sama, tidur pun sama-sama. Saya senang sekali dengan hidup sederhana begini, kerana memang cocok bagi saya. Dengan teman-teman saya kita jumpa teman yang lain, datangnya dari semua probinsi, semua sudut Indonesia yang saya masih belum lihat. Bersama teman saya, saya bisa lihat bagaimana besar ummat Islam itu sebenarnya.*"
18. "*Nggak tahu kapan hari saya ingin sekali pergi ke Indian nanti, kerana semua teman bilang pada saya India itu hebat sekali. Tiap kali saya jumpa dengan teman dari India, mereka semuanya orang yang sederhana, soleh, hidupnya yang soleh juga, bukan seperti kita di Indonesia. Kita orang Indonesia tidak lurus kerana ini negara sekuler. Ada Pancasila dari zaman Suharto, dan Indonesia negara dimana ada banyak orang yang Kristen juga. Di Bali semuanya Hindu. Kita masih bukan semua Islam, bukan seperti di India di mana ummat Islamnya semua baik, dan mereka hidup sederhana seperti orang zaman Nabi. Di India saya ingin lihat semua yang dari zaman Khilafah. Muslim di zaman itu hebat sekali. Di India saya mahu lihat semua yang saya lihat dan baca di koran-koran, dan di TV. Saya mahu lihat Taj Mahal, masjid yang agung, istana agung. Zaman Orde Baru yang orang Indonesia omong-omongkan hanya Borobudur dan Prambanan. Tapi itu semua bukan Muslim bukan? Itu semuanya ketinggalan Hindu. Di India orang Muslim masih kekalkan ketinggalan mereka, semua masih bangga, bukan di sini.*"
19. The Persatuan Islam (Persis) was founded in Bandung, West Java, in 1923 by Haji Muhammad Yunus and Haji Zamzam. Its most important founder-leader, however, was the Tamil Muslim scholar Ahmad Hassan who migrated to the Dutch East Indies from Singapore. Persis was set up as a movement to purify normative practices of popular Islam in Indonesia and was decidedly reformist in its outlook. It published numerous journals, magazines, and periodicals that promoted the teachings of the Wahabbi school and opened up *madrasas* in Indonesia to teach its own brand of neo-Salafi Islam to both *pribumi* Indonesians and those of Arab descent. In time Persis also developed as one of the first overtly political Islamist movements in Indonesia, based on the claim that in Islam, politics could not be separated from religion. Persis later led the movement for the creation of an independent Indonesian state founded on Islam and ruled according to shari'a law.
20. The al-Irshad movement was founded in 1914 in Jakarta by the Sudanese scholar Ahmad Sukarti. From the outset the al-Irshad movement was a magnet for Indonesians of Arab and Hadrami descent, and it soon became the most visible vehicle for Arab mobilization in the Dutch East Indies. Set up as a reformist movement that was Wahhabi and Salafi in outlook, the al-Irshad movement sought to purify Indonesian Islam of traces that were deemed un-Islamic or anti-Islamic,

such as popular folk religion, superstition, and the cult of ancestors. Nevertheless the al-Irshad movement was itself heavily influenced by the cultural norms of the Arab members and leaders, many of whom came from Hadramaut and claimed the title of "*Sayyid*", claiming to be direct descendants of the family of the Prophet Muhammad or his companions. Ahmad Sukarti had originally been sent to the East Indies to serve as the inspector to the Arab-based schools that had been set up as part of the Jamiat Khair network. However, on his arrival he found that the standard of the schools was poor and he soon engaged in disputes with scholars of the local Arab community. In frustration he left his post and founded the al-Irshad movement in 1914. Sukarti then set up his own school and opened a new network of Arabic schools under the auspices of al-Irshad. These became the most prominent Arab-backed schools in the East Indies then, and were widely seen as elitist institutions that promoted an interpretation of Islam as promulgated by the Wahhabi and neo-Salafi schools.

21. Dr Haydar noted that his grandfather had gone to trade in Kelantan and like many of the Indian Muslims then, was inclined to trade in gold and jewellery. However, Kelantan is unique for the simple reason that it is the only Malay state where the trade in gold and jewellery had always been monopolized by the local Kelantan Malays. Due to excessive competition in the field, Baharam Khan chose to trade in cloth and Indian spices instead.
22. The Pakistani Mosque of Kota Bharu is no longer there: It was burned down in a freak accident a few years ago.
23. On conversion narratives see Ronald Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1950).

11

FROM KARACHI TO KUALA LUMPUR
Charting Sufi Identity across the Indian Ocean

Robert Rozehnal

As a case study of transnational religious identity, this chapter charts how a distinctly South Asian Sufi order has taken root in twenty-first century Southeast Asia. The Chishti Sabiri *silsila* is grounded in a long and storied Indo-Muslim past, and now thrives in contemporary Pakistan. Recently, however, the order has spread beyond the Indian subcontinent, expanding its cultural and historical boundaries via a complex teaching network centred on an interlocking web of master-disciple (*pir-murid*) relationships. During the 1970s, a number of Malaysian students studying medicine in Karachi became disciples of the Pakistani Sufi master, Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh Sial Rabbani (d. 1995). Over time, this interpersonal network continued to develop. Today, a dynamic group of Malaysian Chishti Sabiri disciples live and work in and around the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. Fully enmeshed in the contingencies of modern life in urban Southeast Asia, these modern Sufis move fluidly between multiple epistemological, linguistic, and geographical universes. At the same time, as the devotees of Pakistani Sufi masters, these Malaysian disciples are directly linked to a definitively South Asian religious identity. Drawing on recent fieldwork and research, this chapter traces the complex process of cultural accommodation and adaptation involved in transplanting the Chishti Sabiri *silsila* across the Indian Ocean, from Karachi

to Kuala Lumpur. With attention to both texts and ethnographic contexts, I explore how today's growing contingent of Malaysian Chishti Sabiri disciples experience and explain their Sufi identity.[1]

My inquiry here focuses on two particular dimensions of Sufi experience: pilgrimage and publication. Embodied ritual performance has always been at the very heart of Sufi practice and Chishti Sabiri identity. Sufism (Islamic mysticism) centres on techniques of mental and bodily discipline, coupled with a detailed theory of subjectivity.[2] On entering a Sufi order, a disciple (*murid*) relinquishes personal autonomy, surrendering autonomy to the will of a teacher (*shaykh*). To quote a well-known adage, this surrender must be total and uncompromising, "like a corpse in the hands of a washerman". That's the ideal. In practice, however, the intimate relationship with a Sufi *shaykh* is far more complex, a balancing act between submission to hierarchical authority, and an imperative for individual action and moral responsibility. In their spiritual quest, individual Sufi disciples are not alone. Devotees provide their spiritual compatriots with a vital support system — sharing experiences, clarifying doubts, ambiguities and anxieties, and participating in communal ritual activities. To illustrate this dynamic, I survey some of the stories that Malaysian Chishti Sabiri *murid* tell themselves and one another about the methods, meanings, and experiences of the Sufi spiritual journey (*suluk*).

Chishti Sabiri ritual praxis centres on the intimate relationship between a Sufi master and his disciples — a private and closely guarded network of knowledge. Sufis push the boundaries of normative Islamic practice through a disciplined programme of supererogatory prayers, Qur'an recitation, *zikr* (ritual chanting of the names of God), and *muraqaba* (meditation) as prescribed by the teaching *shaykh*. Distanced from their Pakistani spiritual teachers, Malaysian Chishti Sabiris typically perform these daily rituals in isolation. In fact, face-to-face interaction with their Pakistani *shaykhs* is actually quite rare, limited largely to cyberspace where advice on both worldly and spiritual matters is communicated digitally via e-mail. In fact, the fluid incorporation of technology into Sufi practice is just one salient example of how contemporary Malaysian disciples have accommodated to modern life and the logistical challenges of this complex transnational Sufi network.

Overall, there remains a striking continuity to Sufi ritual practices, linking the present generation of *murid* to their pre-modern predecessors. The interpretive frameworks of selfhood and the transmission of knowledge via the intimate master-disciple relationship remain absolutely central to contemporary Chishti Sabiri practice. Even so, Sufism does not exist in a vacuum. Like all religious traditions, Sufism is coloured by culture, shaped by politics, and malleable to historical change. In the pubic spheres of post-

colonial Pakistan and Malaysia, Sufism is an emotive, multivalent, and highly contested symbol in the contestation over the roots of Islamic authority and authenticity.[3] Within this divisive discourse, competing groups evoke Sufi doctrine, piety, and practices to either defend or decry the tradition's Islamic credentials. This includes the State as well. In defence of their own tradition, Malaysian Chishti Sabiris have followed the lead of their Pakistani counterparts, adopting the instruments of mass media — from the printing press to the Internet — to engage a broad national, and international audience. Asserting the *orthodoxy* of Sufi thought and practice, the order's publications articulate a post-colonial and transnational religious identity that is simultaneously Muslim, modern, and mystic.

TRANSPLANTING THE *SILSILA*: MALAYSIAN DISCIPLES

Who are the Chishti Sabiri Sufis? Tracing its past (and its name) to the town of Chisht in central Afghanistan, the Chishtiyya lineage is most deeply rooted in South Asia.[4] In the thirteenth century, the eponymous founder of the Sabiri sub-branch, 'Ali Ahmad Sabir (d. 1291), initiated an alternative model of spiritual asceticism and withdrawal from public, urban life and the allure of the royal courts. Renowned for their intense, awe-inspiring (*jalali*) personalities, Chishti Sabiri *shaykhs* historically stuck to rural locales. Unlike their well-known Chishti Nizami counterparts, they made relatively limited public appearances, trained few devotees, avoided writing books, and generally avoided the construction of large shrine complexes (*dargahs*). As a result, much of the Chishtis Sabiri order's early history remains elusive and opaque, shrouded in legend. This, however, changed over the course of the colonial era. Faced with the rising communal polemics and competition of nineteenth-century colonial India, Chishti Sabiri masters increasingly came to view silence and withdrawal as untenable. Mounting the public stage to defend their tradition from its critics, prominent *shaykhs* called for social reform and religious revitalization, publishing a broad range of texts and founding influential educational institutions such as the famous Deoband *madrasa*.[5]

For today's Chishti Sabiri disciples in Pakistan, three modern spiritual masters set the standard for Sufi piety and practice: Muhammad Zauqi Shah (1877–1951), and his two principal successors, Shahidullah Faridi (1915–78) and Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani (1910–95).[6] This trio of twentieth-century Sufi masters were profoundly shaped by their times. They were each acquainted by education and experience with the institutions and ideology of the colonial state. As writers and ideologues, these *shaykhs* resolutely defended the orthodoxy of Sufism on the contested public stage of post-colonial Pakistan. As spiritual

guides they also communicated the disciplinary techniques of embodied and enacted ritual performance (*suluk*) to their loyal followers. Publicly and privately, these Chishti Sabiri exemplars defined Sufism as an interiorized, personal struggle for self-mastery, mediated within an overarching moral community. Above all, their teachings aimed to cultivate a modern, virtuous self through interpersonal networks of knowledge and practice. Today their legacy lives on among a new generation of Chishti Sabiri disciples in Pakistan and, more recently, in Malaysia.

Significantly, this particular sub-branch of the Chishti Sabiri order has long welcomed both Western converts and Muslim outsiders into its fold. Among the most influential of these foreign disciples is a dynamic group of Malaysian *murid*, all of them the disciples of Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh Sial Rabbani. The Malaysian disciples each attribute their introduction to the order to a single individual: a medical doctor from the northern state of Kelantan who was inducted into the *silsila* in 1979 while pursuing his medical education in Karachi. Following his lead, several other Malaysian students who were at the time studying in Pakistan also joined the Chishti Sabiri ranks. Over time this interpersonal network has grown, and today there is a core group of more than one hundred Malaysian *murids*. During his lifetime, Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh maintained contact with his Malaysian devotees via active correspondence, writing an endless stream of letters addressing both spiritual and temporal matters. The *shaykh* also visited Malaysia on two occasions late in life (in December 1990, and August 1994) staying for several weeks on each trip. Since Wahid Bakhsh's death in 1995, the Malaysians have continued to maintain their own Sufi ritual practices, while also publishing a wide range of Sufi texts and travelling frequently to Pakistan and India on pilgrimage. In my view, the Chishti Sabiri order's gradual spread into Southeast Asia signals an important shift in the *silsila's* makeup and *modus operandi*. While the order has always adapted to change, the transition into an entirely new geographical and cultural context signals a significant break with historical precedent.

Like their Pakistani counterparts, the Malaysian *murids* fit a general profile: they are mostly well-educated, middle-class, mobile urbanites. On both sides of the Indian Ocean, women play an active and vital role in the *silsila*, both privately and publicly. Not surprisingly, there is significant ethnic diversity among the Malaysian disciples. While the majority are Malay Muslims, their numbers include a strong contingent of non-Malay Muslim converts as well: five prominent *murids* are of Chinese decent and two of Indian background.[7] Most disciples are multilingual, though with their Pakistani *shaykhs* and peers they typically communicate in English. This plurality prompts a series

of immediate questions: Why would a Pakistani sub-branch of a distinctly South Asian Sufi order appeal to Southeast Asians? How do these Malaysian *murids* make sense of the centrality of Pakistan and a Pakistani identity in their *shaykh*'s writings? And does the physical distance — to say nothing of the cultural, linguistic, and national barriers — never present problems?

In interviews, Malaysian *murid* responded to such questions by insisting that their personal bonds with Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh Sial Rabbani and their fellow Pakistani disciples transcend all other boundaries. In the words of a senior male disciple, "The question of nationality never really comes into our minds. It was just a pleasure to be his [Wahid Bakhsh's] *murid*, an honor. Even now when we visit Pakistan, we are treated like family. There is no question of nationality or race. We are just part of a family, a larger identity."[8] These sentiments are echoed by another senior male *murid*:

> It was never a problem. He [Wahid Bakhsh] was a guide, a spiritual guide. He guided people to God, through love and by taking a deep interest in them. It never mattered that he was Pakistani. There was never any doubt about that at all. He was just a teacher. He worked towards attracting people to God. That's what he did. I loved him very much. The way he provided for us, like a father. There was no politics. He was attracting us to God. That is how he spent his time.[9]

This is an apt summation of an idealized *pir-murid* relationship. It also suggests that even as the *silsila*'s transnational reach continues to expand, the fundamental bond between Sufi master and disciple continues to cement Chishti Sabiri identity.

Perhaps the most striking account of personal transformation that I heard during my fieldwork came from Wahid Bakhsh's first Malaysian disciple, a doctor who now lives and practises medicine in Kuala Lumpur. As a young man he arrived in Pakistan in 1978 and immediately enrolled at a local *madrasa.* Through a series of personal contacts, he was gradually drawn into the orbit of the *silsila* and frequently attended the weekly *zikr* sessions. Despite frequent requests, however, he failed to be formally accepted as a disciple. A growing desperation for spiritual guidance culminated with a trip to Pakpattan Sharif — the shrine of the famous Chishti luminary, Baba Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakkar (d. 1265) in Pakistan's Punjab. It was an experience that would profoundly alter the trajectory of his life. I heard this story circulated on numerous occasions among disciples in both Malaysia and Pakistan, but it is best told in his own words:

> One day, I heard that the *murids* were going to go to Pakpattan Sharif. I was told that in Pakpattan nobody's requests are rejected, so I packed my

> bags and followed the group. It was the '*urs* [Annual Celebration] of Baba Farid. On the final days [*sic*] of the '*urs*, I still had not received discipleship. I was disappointed and frustrated. I went down to the shrine and joined a group reciting the Qur'an. Suddenly, I received some illuminations (*kashfiyyat*). I fell down. People carried me to Hazrat Wahid Bakhsh's hut, outside the shrine. I sensed that I was unconscious, but I could still hear people talking around me. They were screaming, "He has had a heart attack!" Hazrat Sahab [Wahid Bakhsh] came and blew on me. While I was unconscious I saw something. I experienced something very beautiful. Then I awoke and described what had happened. Hazrat Sahab agreed, "Yes. This is what happened. You don't have a *shaykh,* but you have a great deal of concentration. You are open to these things. You don't have a filter. A *shaykh* is a filter." The next day, the following night, there was a *sama*' [musical assembly] scheduled, but he told me that I should not attend. He said, "It's too much for you. But tomorrow, if you see something in a dream, then come to me." The following day I returned early in the morning, and waited for him. Hazrat Sahab asked, "Did you see anything?" I said, "No, sir. But please, I want to become your *murid*!" He said, "Ok, make *wudu'* [ritual washing]." I became his *murid* right then and there. This was in 1979. At that time Hazrat Wahid Bakhsh had not yet started taking *murids* [*sic*]. I was the first.[10]

This remarkable testimonial offers a striking example of the intensity and transformative power of the master-disciple relationship described by many Chishti Sabiri disciples. It also attests to the power of persuasion. In time, this private experience became public knowledge, inspiring a number of other Malaysians to join the *silsila*. To a large extent, the Chishti Sabiri order's growing foothold in Southeast Asia can be traced to this singular ecstatic experience decades ago at a Sufi shrine in rural Pakistan.

INDIAN OCEAN PILGRIMAGE NETWORKS

For contemporary Chishti Sabiris on both sides of the Indian Ocean, it is the annual pilgrimages to Sufi shrines in Pakistan that the order's communal identity is most clearly expressed and experienced. Four times a year disciples travel to prominent shrines throughout Pakistan to celebrate the death anniversary (*'urs*) of the spiritual luminaries of their tradition.[11] On these occasions, Malaysian *murid* join their Pakistani counterparts for a week of spiritual immersion. Mirroring, for a short but intense period of time, the dynamics of the traditional Sufi hospice (*khanaqa*), the liminal experience of pilgrimage provides a rare opportunity for disciples to live

and worship together in the presence of their teaching *shaykh* as a collective, unified whole. It is also at the '*urs* where Chishti Sabiri adepts, particularly novices, benefit most directly from the knowledge of their peers via an oral teaching network communicated in story-telling circles. Between the rigours of their daily ritual devotions, *murids* frequently gather together in small groups where they recall personal experiences, dreams, visions, doubts and fears, and narrate legends about past spiritual masters. Not surprisingly, disciples describe *'urs* as a vital dimension of their Sufi training. Many go to great lengths to attend these pilgrimages, accepting significant sacrifices in their own personal lives and finances in order to integrate these annual events into their calendars. The logistics and costs of long-distance travel to Pakistan are especially challenging for the Malaysian *murid*. Even so, many of them regularly attend, insisting that the spiritual benefits are worth every effort. "We go when we can. If it is possible, if they have the means, *murids* normally attend. Our *shaykhs* strongly encourage it", an elder Malaysian disciple assured me. "We know from experience that *'urs* is a very important training ground, an important part of *suluk*. Once you have tasted it you always want to go."[12]

Chishti Sabiri sacred space is now marked on Malaysian soil as well. For the Malaysian disciples, the annual pilgrimages to Pakistan are complemented by frequent visits to Pulau Besar: a humble Sufi shrine complex off the Strait of Malacca that has been officially appropriated into the Chishti Sabiri spiritual domain. The shrine of Sultan al-'Arifin ("The King of Gnostics"), Shaykh Isma'il 'Abd al-Qadir Thani, is located on Pulau Besar ("Big Island"). Despite the name, this is a small plot of land (ten square miles) located five miles south of the town of Melaka, three miles off the coastline in the Strait of Malacca. The island served as a Japanese military base during the Second World War, and today is the site of Pandanusa Resort — a small-scale tourist attraction with a restaurant, swimming pool, and a modest eighteen-hole golf course.[13] It is also rich in history and contains an array of ancient, unmarked graves. The shrine of the Sufi saint, Sultan al-'Arifin, is located in a prominent position near the beachfront. The grave was covered with an elaborate wooden structure until the 1970s when it was torn down. It has recently been rebuilt as a modest open-air tomb constructed of tiles, covered with a metal roof, and surrounded by a gate. The tomb complex is currently administered by a local w*aqf*.[14] While the local Malay and Indian Muslim communities are the shrine's primary patrons, groups of Chinese and Hindu devotees visit regularly as well. In a revealing statement, a senior Malaysian *murid* likened the shrine to Ajmer Sharif — the massive tomb

complex of the Chishti saint, Mu'in al-Din Chishti in Rajasthan, North India — describing it a sacred and powerful site that draws a host of devotees from diverse religious backgrounds.[15]

The story of Sultan al-'Arifin, Shaykh Ismail 'Abd al-Qadir Thani, is shrouded in mystery. According to Chishti Sabiris, the shrine's caretaker possesses a spiritual genealogy (*shajara*) in Jawi (Malay language written in Arabic script). This document names Sultan al-'Arifin as the son of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Jilani Thani (d. 1533), the famous Qadiri saint of Uch Sharif, an ancient city located seventy miles southwest of Multan in Pakistan.[16] With the exception of this genealogy, however, there seems to be no extant archive of the saint, no further textual records to document the details of his life and legacy. As a result of this erasure, Sultan al-'Arifin's memory is perpetuated exclusively through oral histories, some of them conflictive. According to local legend, the *shaykh* received explicit instructions to travel to the area to proselytize (*tabligh*) in a vision at the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad during a pilgrimage to Mecca (*umra*). He arrived on a merchant ship, and spent most of his life preaching on the mainland before transitioning to the island. In local memory, the saint is credited with converting large numbers of the local population to Islam. Yet beyond these standard hagiographic tropes, little else is known about Sultan al-'Arifin. It is worth noting, however, that the broad swathe of his life closely parallel the traditional life narrative of the famous sixteenth-century Malay scholar, poet, and Qadiri master, Hamzah Fansuri. As historian Peter Riddell notes, this fits a pervasive pattern:

> The earliest documented case we have of a Malay scholar traveling [*sic*] to the Arab world to undertake studies of the Islamic sciences is that of Hamzah Fansuri, the great mystic of the late 16th century. He was initiated into the Qadiriyya Sufi Order in Arabia, and in doing so established, or perhaps continued, a tradition which many Malay religious scholars were later to follow.[17]

In October 2001, I visited Pulau Besar in the company of a senior Malaysian disciple. As the shrine's caretaker was absent that day, we toured the island with a villager and spiritual devotee of the saint who related the local history. According to our interlocutor, Sultan al-'Arifin's own spiritual guide, Sayyid Yusuf Saddiq, a Naqshabandi *shaykh* from Baghdad, is also buried within the confines of the tomb complex. The island is dotted with a number of other unmarked graves as well. These are said to include seven Sufi masters from Indonesia who were spiritually guided to the island by the nine legendary

saints of Java (*wali sanga*), along with two other *shaykhs* from Baghdad — all of them the *murids* of Sultan al-'Arifin.[18] Our guide also led us to two other humble graves, both of them women: a local Hindu convert and the wife of the saint who was originally from Palembang in South Sumatra.

A great deal of research on the history of Pulau Besar and the role of its Sufi inhabitants in the spread of Islam throughout peninsular Malaysia and the Indonesian Archipelago remains to be done, to say the least. What is clear, however, is that historical ambiguity does not deter contemporary religious faith and practice. On a visit to Malaysia in 1991, Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani accompanied his Malaysian disciples to the island for pilgrimage. After performing prayers and *muraqaba,* he publicly sanctioned the space for Chishti Sabiri ritual practice. In the words of a senior disciple, "According to my *shaykh*, this *mazar* here at Pulau Besar oversees the care of all Malaysia. He [Sultan al-'Arifin, Shaykh Ismail 'Abd al-Qadir Thani] is in charge of this territory of Malaysia. He is the real source of spiritualism in this country."[19]

As part of their regular cycle of Sufi rituals, a group of Malaysian *murids* travel to the shrine for *ziyarat* on the last Sunday of each month. They also make the trip during the '*urs* of major Chishti Sabiri *shaykhs* if they are unable to travel to Pakistan or India in person. At the shrine, disciples sit in *muraqaba* while facing the saint's tomb. *Murid* describe the outpouring of spiritual energy, or *faizan*, at the shrine as overpowering.[20] "It's just like electric current, like this wind blowing towards you", a male disciple told me. "You feel a sensation. It goes right through you. It makes your hair stand up and you feel high."[21] For Malaysian Chishti Sabiris, the intensity of this experience offers tangible, physical proof of the *silsila's* powerful connection with Sultan al-'Arifin.

Chishti Sabiris in Malaysia carry on with their ritual practices in an environment that, in many ways, parallels that of their Pakistani counterparts. In Malaysia too, Sufism is a highly contested symbol in a politicized public debate over Islamic authenticity, and religion's relationship with state ideology and power. Given this highly charged atmosphere, *murid* necessarily maintain a low profile. In the words of a prominent disciple, "We keep quiet because of the government. In Indonesia Sufism is everywhere. In Pakistan, they participate in '*urs* celebrations. But here, there is nothing. In fact, instead of celebrating they destroy the *mazars*. One of the largest ones, in fact, was demolished by the state government."[22] For the growing ranks of Chishti Sabiri disciples in Malaysia, therefore, the shrine of Pulau Besar provides a vital outlet for the experience and expression of Sufi identity.

PUBLISHING THE PATH

As modern Pakistani Sufi masters, Muhammad Zauqi Shah, Shahidullah Faridi, and Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani combined spiritual pedagogy and practice with literary acumen in order to ground Sufism in a distinctly modern idiom. Together, they produced an eclectic range of texts, written in both Urdu and English. In them, the *shaykhs* valorize Chishti Sabiri identity as a defence against the tradition's critics and a barrier against Western cultural encroachment and political hegemony. Addressing a diverse Pakistani and international audience, they employ technical and scientific vocabulary in combination with mass media to demonstrate the enduring relevance of Sufism's doctrinal teachings and ritual practices. In all this, however, these Chisti Sabiri *shaykhs* were not unique. Other notable twentieth-century South Asian Sufi masters pursued similar reformist agendas, including the Chishti Nizami masters, Sayyid Mehr Ali Shah (1856–1937) and Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1878–1955), as well as the Naqshbandi activist, Pir Jama'at 'Ali Shah (1841–1951).[23] The combined efforts of these twentieth-century Chishti Sabiri leaders, however, constitute a marked deviation from the precedent of their earlier Sufi counterparts who largely avoided urban spaces and networks of royal patronage in favour of a life of spiritual quietism in rural locales. Accepting the "challenge of mobilizing the same resources of past generations", these *shaykhs* entered the public sphere to articulate "creative responses to new realities".[24]

Following the example of their earlier twentieth-century exemplars, today's Chishti Sabiris continue to produce a voluminous corpus of texts. From doctrinal tracts and ritual manuals to political and polemical works, these contemporary writings address multiple audiences in diverse rhetorical styles and languages. Chishti Sabiri publications target three distinct audiences in particular. The primary readership is clearly the *silsila*'s own members. For disciples, printed texts preserve the collective wisdom of the order's spiritual luminaries. At the same time, they also serve as important heuristic tools. In fact, books are fully integrated into contemporary Chishti Sabiri practice, complementing and clarifying the oral teachings communicated via the master-disciple relationship. As both an invitation to practise and a litmus test for individual spiritual development, the *shaykhs*' writings on doctrine and practice continue to guide Sufi adepts through the twists and turns of the Sufi path.

Beyond this internal consumption, Chishti Sabiri publications are also aimed at a much wider audience. Through its array of published texts, the *silsila* clearly hopes to attract a diverse spectrum of readers who are interested in Sufism, regardless of personal background and level of commitment. In interviews, however, disciples assert that the fundamental goal of the *silsila*'s

publication efforts is communication, not conversion. According to the senior Pakistani disciple who oversees the order's largest publishing house in Karachi, Mahfil-i Zauqiyya, the order seeks to avoid both proselytizing and political diatribe:

> These books are not meant to be controversial. They can benefit everybody and anybody, whether he is from a group that accepts *tasawwuf* or one that does not. We, as a rule, do not condemn anybody. Is it not the way of the Sufi saints to condemn any sect or any religion or any particular group of people. Proselytizing (*tabligh*) is something different altogether. We are spreading the word of Allah as we understand it, as our *masha'ikh* have understood it, in the light of the Qur'an and *sunna* [the example of the Prophet Muhammad]. They understood and embodied it, and we are continuing that practice. So we do not take an apologetic attitude. If you like it, fine. If you don't like it, fine. All this sectarianism which has started recently is basically out of ignorance, nothing else. The way of the Sufis is to bring people closer rather than to divide them.[25]

This is an intriguing statement that illuminates a careful balancing act. Chishti Sabiris critique their Islamist critics for mixing religion and politics. By comparison, they insist that they are beyond polemics. Yet in printing and disseminating these texts, the *silsila* purposefully enters the contested public sphere in an effort to stake a claim to Islamic authority and authenticity. Within the combative landscape of today's Pakistan, such a proactive publishing campaign can only be seen as an overtly political act.

At a broader level, Chishti Sabiri publications target a transnational, global audience as well. This is evidenced in the continued emphasis on the production and dissemination of English language texts — a common strategy among a range of Muslim groups who have learned to harness the power of global mass media technologies.[26] Following the precedent established by Muhammad Zauqi Shah, Chishti Sabiri *shaykhs* have continuously written in both Urdu and English. Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani in particular expressed an explicit interest in engaging the West in many of his writings. According to one of the *shaykh*'s most prominent disciples:

> He [Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh] used to tell me that in many places, people would not want to read these books. But outsiders, people in the West, people who are thirsty for this knowledge, they might see it in a more positive way. He published them for people who were interested. Especially in the West, people are really longing for this. It's missing there, so that is the reason.[27]

Following this example, the *silsila* continues to operate in multiple linguistic and cultural registers. It is important to note that this multifaceted approach

mirrors the discursive strategy of the contemporary *ulama* outlined by historian Muhammad Qasim Zaman. As he notes:

> In general, the ulama compete — not unfavorably — for a popular audience with new religious intellectuals, but they have also continued to write for an elite audience of religious specialists. Distinctions between a general and a specialized audience, between exoteric and esoteric matters, have a long history in Islam… It is worth noting that the technology of print has easily adapted to such distinctions, enabling the religious scholars to assert their ability to speak to different audiences at different levels — and even in different languages.[28]

The transnational profile of the Chishti Sabiri publication campaign is most clearly demonstrated in Malaysia. In a further effort to transplant Chishti Sabiri Sufism in Southeast Asian soil, Malaysian *murids* have established an independent printing press in Kuala Lumpur. To date, A.S. Noordeen Publishers has published four key texts in English editions: a version of Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani's translation of the Persian classic by al-Hujwiri (d. 1074); *Kashf al-Mahjub*, a selective translation of the *malfuzat* of the Chishti Sabiri master, Shaykh Sayyid Shah Waris Hasan (d. 1936); an edition of Shahidullah Faridi's Sufi primer, *Inner Aspects of Faith*; and, a reprint of Wahid Bakhsh's lengthy monograph, *Islamic Sufism*. Though modest in scope and scale, these publishing efforts are nonetheless noteworthy. After all, literature of any kind on Sufism is a rarity in Malaysia where — as in Pakistan — Sufism is a highly contested symbol in a combative public debate over Islamic orthodoxy. Despite this restrictive atmosphere, however, it appears that Chishti Sabiri publications have begun to draw a local audience. Notably, this includes members of other Sufi orders. According to a disciple actively involved in the order's publication efforts: "There are some *shaykhs*, Sufis here in Malaysia. They are actually now using these books like textbooks. When they instruct their *murids* they say, 'Buy this book', and then they read from it. Slowly this is correcting aberrations. There are no other resources because there is no strong Sufi tradition here anymore".[29] Until now, the Malaysian publications have been limited to English, though the *murids* intend to make them available in the national language (Bahasa Malaysia). According to another senior disciple eventually:

> When it comes to *tasawwuf*, the Malays will look for a book in *bahasa*. To find a book in *tasawwuf* in English is something that for them is, well, strange. They don't go for it. We tried to translate them, but translating these books is not so easy. The translator must be a spiritual person. We arrange for a man in Indonesia to translate *Islamic Sufism*, but he made

> some mistakes. He remarked, "I have translated the work, but I do not agree with it." So we didn't publish it.[30]

Significantly, the Malaysians have broken new ground in another vital arena as well. Since 1996, a tech-savvy disciple has managed an online website: <www.moonovermedina.com>. Entitled "Moon Over Medina: A Sufi Book Collection", this virtual bookstore offers the *silsila*'s publications for sale to global cybersurfers on the World Wide Web. The site's main page displays a brief description of each book, along with a full-colour photograph of the cover. A link, "More on Sufism", provides short extracts from the texts, along with a pair of independent essays in English by Shaykh Muhammad Zauqi Shah. According to the site's manager — a Malay businessman educated in America — most of the visitors are foreigners, mainly from the United States. In his words:

> The Website is quite interesting. The largest proportion [of visitors] are Americans. When they submit their orders they use a Christian name, but sometimes when they send me an email to confirm their orders some use Muslim names. I've had several orders from Switzerland, and inquiries from Europe, Canada and Brazil. When I started there were about ten to fifteen visitors a day. It's like a shop, having people come in and browse every day. Now it is up to forty people a day, about 1,200 a month. Of those, only a few are buying books. I added articles [by Zauqi Shah] on Sufism, and a lot of people go there to look at them. They also look at the extracts from the books. I do not accept credit cards, and that is the problem. At one point I was going to, but I decided against it. The main reason was the volume. I just wouldn't be able to cope with the volume, because I'm the only one running it. I post the books myself — I go to the post office myself and collect the checks. It doesn't make any money, just enough to cover the fees.[31]

The Internet offers a new platform to communicate Chishti Sabiri identity to a potentially vast global audience. By launching into cyberspace, the *silsila* joins a growing movement of Muslims in diverse cultural settings who are rapidly adapting to this new technology, much as their predecessors capitalized on the advent of the printing press. As Jon Anderson illustrates:

> They range from political activists to Sufi orders, from mobilization to witness. They both recruit and propagandize, bringing their issues into a wider, already public sphere in some cases but in others carving out a new one that encompasses or repackages existing ones, compelling dialogue by leveraging forms of communication that reshape the social field… Islam on the Internet is first a story of new interpreters, newly emboldened by confidence in and command of the channel.[32]

While at present the Internet is accessible only to a privileged core of educated, middle-class professionals, it has the potential to transform the boundaries of public discursive space radically. "New forms of communication and their increased rapidity allow "peripheries" and audiences to talk back and can infuse new life to local and regional traditions," argues Dale Eickelman. "The new political geography of communications may actually facilitate pluralism. In the sense that symbolic and political connections across national and other political boundaries are encouraged, conventional understandings of 'external' and 'internal' become increasingly blurred."[33] In theory and increasingly in practice, cyberspace expands networks of knowledge and builds alternative communities, unbound by physical space, gender boundaries, and national borders. For these reasons, it is a useful tool for the Chishti Sabiri order's ongoing efforts to expand its reach beyond the confines of South Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

In *Mullahs on the Mainframe*, anthropologist Jonah Blank demonstrates how the Daudi Bohras of Bombay and Karachi have responded to the tectonic shifts of global modernity. This dynamic South Asian Shi'a community, Blank notes, is distinguished by "the holistic nature of their modernization". They "regard modern technology [and its accompanying ease of societal communication] as something beneficial even on its own merits … New technologies are not adopted solely for the sake of novelty, but anything that brings the community closer — or simply makes life easier — is heartily encouraged."[34] I would argue that this is equally true of the contemporary Chishti Sabiri Sufi order. Adding their own voice to the divisive debate over Islamic identity in the public sphere, Chishti Sabiris have learned to use new technologies to amplify their defence of Sufi piety and practice. In multiple locations, languages, and forums, today's *silsila* uses mass media in an effort to defend tradition, articulate identity, and expand the boundaries of community. At the same time, the order maintains the personalized networks of knowledge and nexus of bodily practices that link today's practitioners to a sacralized Sufi past.

An examination of this complex Indian Ocean network illustrates that in today's Malaysia, as in Pakistan, Chishti Sabiri Sufism is imagined and inscribed anew in texts, even as it continues to be embodied and performed in ritual contexts. The ways in which the order continues to expand and develop through its deployment of mobility, technology, and religious practice can thus provide us with important insights into some of the most recent dynamics of Muslim interactions across South and Southeast Asia.

Notes

1. This chapter draws on material published in a recent monograph, *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). The research is based on fourteen months of fieldwork in Pakistan (September 2000–October 2001) and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (October–November 2001), conducted under the auspices of fellowships from the Social Science Research Council and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies. At the request of members of the Chishti Sabiri order, I have withheld the names of individual respondents when quoting from personal interviews in the interest of anonymity and privacy.
2. A nuanced analysis of Sufi ritual practice is found in Scott Kugle's recent study, *Sufis and Saints Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). For a broad overview of Sufi psychology and ritual performance, see also Carl W. Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 1997), pp. 81–146; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 98–227.
3. For an analysis of the many parallels between Islamic identity politics in post-colonial Pakistan and Malaysia, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
4. For an overview of the history of the Chishti Sufi order, see Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Sufi Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). The definitive work on the Chishtiyya remains Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's Urdu magnum opus: *Tarikh-i mashayikh-i Chisht* [*The History of the Chishti Sufi Masters*] (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyyat-i Delli, 1980/1985). See also "Chistiyya", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 11 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), pp. 50–56.
5. The most comprehensive overview of the history and legacy of the Deoband *madrasa* is Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). On the politics and polemics of contemporary Sufism, see also Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999); Ernst, *Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, pp. 199–228.
6. While Ernst and Lawrence's monograph, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, focuses primarily on the predominant Chishti Nizami lineage, the authors do give some attention to the Sabiri sub-branch (especially pp. 118–27; 130–40). A comprehensive history of the Chishti Sabiri *silsila*, however, has yet to be written. In *Islamic Sufism Unbound,* I provide a detailed examination of the lives, the Urdu writings, and the multifaceted legacies of Muhammad Zauqi Shah, Shahidullah Faridi, and Wahid Bakhsh Sial Rabbani.
7. Interview: 3 October 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
8. Interview: 30 September 2000, Kuala Lumpur.

9. Interview: 27 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
10. Interview: 6 October 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
11. The writings of contemporary Chishti Sabiri *shaykhs* offer myriad discourses on the significance of *'urs* and pilgrimage to Sufi shrines. In a lecture entitled "Attendance at the *Mazars*", for example, Shaykh Shahidullah Faridi invokes the Qur'an, as well as such Sufi luminaries as al-Ghazzali, Rumi, and Ibn Arabi to articulate a spirited defence of Sufi pilgrimage. See Shahidullah Faridi, *Spirituality in Religion* (Lahore: Talifaat-e Shaheedi, 1999), pp. 115–30. For a detailed discussion of the complex *'urs* rituals at the major Chishti shrine in India, see Syed Liyaqat Hussain Moini, "Rituals and Customary Practices at the Dargah of Ajmer", in *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History and Significance*, edited by Christian W. Troll (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 60–75.
12. Interview: 26 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
13. For details on the island, see the website: <http://www.abcmalaysia.com/tour_malaysia/mlka_pbsr.htm>.
14. Interview: 6 October 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
15. Interview: 2 October 2001, Pulau Besar.
16. Rizvi (1983), p. 58. Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Jilani Thani was the eldest son of Shaykh Muhammad al-Husseini al-Jilani, the founder of the first Qadiriyya *khanaqah* at Uch. A native of Turkey, Shaykh Muhammad travelled to Khurasan, and then Multan, before settling with his family in Uch. On the storied history of Uch Sharif, see Mas'ud Hasan Shahab, *Khitta-i pak Uch* (Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy, 1967/1993), pp. 257–61.
17. Peter Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Singapore: Horizon Books, 2001), p. 104. For details on Hamzah Fansuri, see Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 125–28; G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, *The Poems of Hamzah Fansuri* (Dordrecth: Foris Publications, 1986). For a broad examination of the history of Sufism in Southeast Asia, see also Bruce B. Lawrence, "The Eastward Journey of Muslim Kingship: Islam in South and Southeast Asia", *The Oxford History of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 395–431; M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since 1300* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981/1993). None of these sources, however, documents the history of Pulau Besar or the life of Shaykh Ismail 'Abd al-Qadir Thani.
18. On the *wali sanga* and their role in the establishment of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Woodward, *Islam in Java,* pp. 96–101; Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
19. Interview: 2 October 2001, Pulau Besar.
20. *Faizan*, meaning "overflowing" or "abundance", is a common term used to describe the divine blessings and power that radiate from sacred places and holy persons.

A cognate term, *baraka*, is used throughout the Arabic-speaking Muslim world. On *faizan* and its connection to Sufi doctrine and ritual practice, see Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 117–18.

21. Interview: 30 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
22. Ibid.
23. On Sayyid Mehr Ali Shah of Golra, see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 58–59. On Khwaja Hasan Nizami, see Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love,* pp. 113–18. On Jama'at 'Ali Shah, see Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, pp. 190–223; Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 59–61; 103–107. For an overview of Sufi revivalist movements in South Asia, see Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 56–62; 213–24.
24. Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 129.
25. Interview: 21 May 2001, Karachi.
26. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999/2003), p. 8.
27. Interview: 26 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
28. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 58.
29. Interview: 1 October 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
30. Interview: 30 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
31. Interview: 1 October 2001, Kuala Lumpur.
32. Eickelman and Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World*, p. 49.
33. Eickelman and Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World*, p. 38.
34. Jonah Blank, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity Among the Daudi Bohras* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 176.

INDEX

A
Abbas bin Haji Ahmad, 179
Abbasid Caliphate, 29
Abd al-Salam Rafiq, 122
Abd al-Qadir, 51
Abdul Salem, 122, 123
Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, *see also* Munsyi Abdullah
Abdullah Haji Ahmad, 180
Abdullah Ibnu Salam, 70, 73
Abu Abd Allah Mas'ud al-Jawi, 38
Aceh, Islamic art and culture, xvii
Aden, 30
Afghanistan, Taliban movement, 196
Agus Salim, 144
Ahmad Sirhindi, 179, 183, 184
Ahmadiyya, 61, 163
  ba'ya, 144
  community, emergence and expansion, 137–39
  engagement with print culture, xxi
  print and transmission to Southeast Asia, 143
  print jihad, 134–48, 139–43
aja'ib, 29
Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind, 29
al-Azhar University, 116, 178
al-Hamza, 142
al-Hind, 7
al-Jawi, 38
al-Jihad fi'l-Islam, 159
al-Muzaffar Yusuf, 30
al-Qushashi, 55
al-Raniri, 178–79
Aladdin, 100–101
Alamat Langkapuri, 61
Alcoholics Anonymous, 198
Alfieri, Bianca, 58
Aligarh Muslim University, 4, 160
All India Muslim League, 114
Ameer Ali, 140
Amir Ali, 154, 159
Anderson, Benedict, 135
Anderson, Jon, 231
Angkor empire, 17
Anjuman Ishaat-i Islam, 138
Anjuman-i Taraqi-i Islam, 138
anti-British propaganda, 114, 125
anti-Communist insurgency, 200
Arab Middle East, xiii
Arab trading network, evolution, 39
Arab traveler's tales, 29
Arabian Nights, 100
Arabian Peninsula, xviii
Arabic language, use in Islamic scripture, xiii
Arabic script, adoption of, 54
Arabic-Persian literary prototype, 70
Arabist bias, xiii
Archbishop of Goa, 34
Arya Samaj, 140
Ashura, observations of, xvii
Aung-Thwin, Michael, 7
Austro-Hungarian Empire, 109
Azyumardi Azra, 184

B
Baharam Khan, 207
Balai Islam, 188
Balkan Muslims, 110
Bangladesh, population, xxii
Bangsawan, xx, 91, 96

baraka, 37
Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani, 201
Bashiruddin Mahmood Hasan, 138, 143
Battle of Navarino, 155
Bay of Bengal, 14, 17
ba'ya, 144
Beckett, W.R.D., 123
Bengkulu, xvii
bhakti cult, 13
Bhutan, 7
black pepper, 32
Blank, Jonah, 232
Boer War, 122
Bollywood, 205
Book of One Thousand Questions, xx, 69, 69–72
  alternative conversions, 74–78
  dialogue and conversion, 79–81
  transformed versions, 73
Braginsky, Vladimir, 57
brahmin theories, 12
brahmins, 18
British Empire, collapse of, 119
British rule, xxi
  undermining of, 109–33
bulan Safar celebrations, 96
bureaucratic structure, lack of, 3
Bustan al-Salatin, 177

C
Calicut, 30
camphor, 31
Central Java, religious transformations, 68–82
Chattopadhyaya, B.D., 3, 4
Chau Ju-kua, 32
Chaudhuri, Kirti, 26
Chenla, 13
China
  role of, 39
  trade with, 31–34
Chishti Sabiri Sufi, xxi, 219
  Malaysian disciplines, 220
  pilgrimages, 224
  publications, 228
Christianity, xix
chronological divisions, 2
Cinkai Cattamani, 60
Cinkai Necan, 60
civil marriages, 205
coastal trading centres, Islamization, 39
Coedès, Georges, 5, 12
  theory of Indianization, 12
colonialist historiography, 2
Coromandel Coast, 28
cosmopolitan literary culture, 19
creative foreigners, 88–92
Cultivation System, dismantling of, 69
cultural contact, South and Southeast Asia, 1–24
cultural exchange, South Asia and Malay World, 86–106
cultural interactions, xix
cultural transmission, 12
cultural unity, 12

D
Dars-i Nizami structure, 181
Darul Anuar School, 188
Darul Islam, 150
Darul Uloom, 180
Darul Uloom Deoband, 189
De Casparis, J.G., 13, 14
Delhi Sultanate, 2
Delhi, Turkish Sultanate, 16
Denodaya Press, 93
Denothaya Venthira Press, 93
Dewan Dakwah Indonesia Islamiyah, 150
Dirks, Nicholas, 3
Drewes, G.W.J., 49
Dul Muluk, 91
Dutch East India Company, 8
Dutch rule, xxi

E
East India Company (EIC), 89
Eaton, Richard M., xiv
Egypt
  population, xxii
  rise of Fatimids, 29
Eickelman, Dale, 232
El-Islam, 136
Ellis, Evelyn C., 119, 126
Elphinstone College, 89, 90
Empress Victoria Jawi Peranakan Theatrical Company, 91
epochal divisions, 2
Euben, Roxanne, 151
Eurasia, 4

F
Fatimids, rise of, 29
Federation of Malaya, 200
female contract workers, 203
feudal fragmentation, 3
Francisco, Juan, 27
frankincense, 30
Freitag, Ulrike, 38
French Foreign Legion, 117
Funan, 13

G
Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya, 201
Gallop, Annabel, 99
gamelan, 73
gangsa monggang, 78
Garaman inscription, 27
Gazette of India, 125
Geertz, Clifford, 6
Genuine Islam, 163
Germany, 110
Ghadr, 125, 130
Ghulam Ahmad, 139
Golok, 206
Great War, 111, 127–28
Greater China, 7
Greater India, 7, 11, 12
Gupta empire, 2, 14

H
Habib Nuh, 59
Hadhramaut, xviii, 37
Hadhrami families, 37
hadith, 57, 70
hadith studies, Islamic sciences through, 181
Haji Muhammad Amin, 98
Haji Muhammad Siraj, 88
Hall, Kenneth, 28
Hamidullah Siddiqi, 150, 155, 159
Har Dayal, 118
Hasan Hatano, 136
Haydar Ali Tajuddin, 206
Helfferich, Emil, 120
Helfferich, Theodor, 122
hikayat, 95
Hikayat Raja Pasai, 51
Hikayat Alauddin, 98
Hikayat Ganja Mara, 97
Hikayat Gul Bakawali, 97, 98
Hindu-Buddhist traditions, movement of, 24
Hindu colonies, 12
Hindu revivalist group, 197
Historical Atlas of Islam, xxii
Hollweg, Theobald von Bethmann, 117
Holy War campaign, 119
Hurgronje, C. Snouck, 59, 111, 112
Hussein Alatas, 145, 150, 156

I
Ibn al-Arabi, 72
Ibn Battuta, 30, 32, 37, 69
Ibn Hisham, 70
Ibnu Salam, 72, 76
Ibrahim Hawi, 55
Imam Mahdi, 155
Inamullah Khan, 158

Indar Sabha, 96, 97, 98
Indera Sebaha, 97
India Office, 117
Indian activists, 116–18
Indian Deobandi movement, 197
Indian feudalism, 3
Indian history, pre-colonial, 4
Indian Marxist historiography, 24
Indian Muslim organizations, 114
Indian Ocean, 8, 30
  trade, 31
  trading network, 17
Indian Nationalist Party, 122
Indian Revolutionary Party, 117
Indian trading networks, 18
Indianization, 14, 17
Indic influence, 10
Indic language epigraphy, 2
Indo-German plot, 121
Indonesian Archipelago, xviii
Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), 157
Indus River, xiii
Indra Bangsawan, 92
Indramawan theatre group, 87
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, xv
intermarriages, xvi
intermediary communities, 88
Internet, communication of identity, 231
intra-Islamic relations, xviii
Islam
  interconnectedness of development of, xvii
  modern world, and, 161
  nineteenth century, 58–61
  propaganda tool, 127
  sources, 135
  as a system, 156
Islamic cultures, Arabic origins, 17
Islamic organizations, 134
Islamic sciences, 135
Islamic State, Maududi's views, 159
Islamism
  concept of, 151
  South-Eastern, 152
Islamization, 17
  unitary theories of, xvi, xv

J

Jamaat-i Ahmadiyya, 138
Java
  Book of One Thousand Questions, 71–72
  Central Java, religious transformations, 68–82
  late nineteenth century, 69
Javanese art forms, 78, 79, 95
Javanese *suluk* literature, 81
Javanese-Islamic mystical teachings, 72
Jawi Peranakan, 58, 87, 88, 90, 92, 101, 102
Jawi Peranakan Company, 93, 95, 97
Jawi Peranakan Press, 60
Jihad Document, 112
Jihad Proclamation, countering, 112–16
Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 175

K

Kaiser Wilhelm, 111
Kalinga, 27
Kalirungan inscription, 27
Kama al-Din, 138
Kampong Jawa Mosque, 125
Kampung Bali, 96
Kampung Glam, 94, 96
kappiyam poems, 55
Kasim Ismail Mansur, 124, 125
Kelantan, 175
  Chief Minister, 188
Keramat Dato Koya, 58
Khan, Aga, 114, 116
Kinar-i Ravi, 150, 163
Kirttanattirattu, 59

Kling, 27
Knox, Ronald, 212
Komedie Stamboel, 87, 91
Kota Bahru, 187
Kraft, George Frederick Vincent, 122
kshatriya thesis, 12
Kulam Katiru Navalar, 61
Kulke, Hermann, 3

L
Labbai, 52, 53
Laffan, Michael, 38
Lauterbach, Julius, 124
Leiden University, 56, 71
Leiden University Library, 54
Lieberman, Victor, 8, 9
Lincke, Paul, 96
lithographic printing presses, 95
Lombard, Denys, 15

M
Ma'bar, 48
Ma'bar-Nusantara interactions, 52
Ma'bari Islamic traditions, 49
Mabbett, Ian, 12
Madrasah Muhammadiyah, 177
Madrasah Nurul Ittifaq, 179, 182
Mahfil-i Zauqiyya, 229
Majapahit empire, 17
Makhdum Sahib, 94, 97
Maktubat-i imam-i rabbani, 179
Malabar, Islamization, 25–47
Malabar Coast
  Islamization, xv, xx
  trading communities, 41
  Yuan mission, 32
Malay Muslim tradition, xviii
Malay States Guides, 123, 124
Malay States Guides Mule Battery, 125
Malayo-Tamil networks, Islam in, 49–53
Malaysian aloe woods, 31
Malaysian Armed Forces, 208
Malaysian Government Development plans, 186
Malaysian Islamist politics, xxi
Mamat Pushi, 91
Manigraman, 27, 28
Mappilas, 36
Marco Polo, 32, 69
  Perlak, 35
Margoliouth, D.S., 137
maritime Southeast Asia, 39
maritime trade, 25
  Muslim dominance, 18
Marrison, G.E., 49
Markaz Dua Tabligh, 201
Markaz Masjid Muhammadiyah, 201, 202
Marx, theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production, 6
Marxist historiography, 6
Masjid Jamae (Chulia), 58
matrilineality, 36
Maududi, 156
Maulana Ahmad, 143
Maulana Muhammad Barkatullah, 136
Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi, 197
Maulana Muhammad Qassim Nanotawi, 197
Mauryan empire, 2
Mauryan state, structure of, 3
mawlid poetry, 59
McKinnon, E. Edwards, xxiii
Medina-making, 164
Melaka, capture of, 33
Metcalf, Barbara, xiv, 181, 189
Middle East, centre of Muslim World, xix
Ming emperors, 32
Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Hasan, 137
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 137, 168
Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, 138, 143
Mendu, 91

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 161
Mohammed Roem, 150, 156
Mo'tamar-i Alam-i Islami, 158
monsoon system, 26
mosques, architectural forms of, xvi
Mughal empire, 4
Mughal historiography, review of, 20
Muhamed Zamen, 124
Muhammad Ali, 175
Muhammad Ali al-Hindi, 97, 100
Muhammad bin Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri, 56
Muhammad Husayn Batalvi, 142
Muhammad Iqbal, 145, 149, 150
Muhammad Jilani Hamid, 176
Muhammad Khalji, 51
Muhammad Shafi, 160
Muhammad Siraj, 94, 98, 101
Muhammad Zaugi Shah, 221
Muharram, observances, xxiii
Muharram processions, 59
Muktamar Islam, 182
Mule Battery, 126
multi-centred political systems, 13
Munsyi Abdullah, 50
Munsyi Muhammad Said, 93
Muslim fundamentalism, 151
Muslim India and Islamic Review, 138
Muslim nations, populations, xxii
Muslim Necan, 60, 61
Muslim prisoners-of-war, 117
Muslim societies, historical formations, xiv
Muslim Tamil, textual traditions, xx
Muslim trade networks, 25–47
Muslim traders, networks, 28–31
Muslims, Urdu-speaking, 52
Mutiny of 1957, 119
Muziris, 27

N
Nagore Dargah, 58
Naguib Al-Attas, 176
Na'ina Husam al-Din, 50
Naqshbandiyya, 75
naskhi-based calligraphic style, 53
nationalist sentiments, 1930s, 2
Nawabshah, xiii
Nepal, 7
Netherlands Indies, 118, 119, 122
newspapers, 92
Nigeria, population, xxii
Nik Abdul Aziz, 177–78, 185–89
  education and training, 178, 180
Northwest Frontier Province, 207
Nur al-Din al-Raniri, 151, 183–85
  objections to *Wujudi* approaches, 184
Nur al-Din Muhammad, 176
Nur Alam Shah, 125, 126

O
Oetoesan-Hindia, 118
Oliveiro, R.A., 100
Opium War, 118
Orissa, 14
Osman Khan, 124
Osman Raliby, 159
Ottoman Empire, 109, 115, 118
  alliance with Germany, 123
  conflict with Great Britain, 113

P
Pagan, 17
Pahang, British Protection, 115
Pakistan Institute of World Affairs, 156
Pakistan Mosque, Kota Bahru, 207
Pakistan, populations, xxii
Pakpattan Sharif, xxi
Palembang, 95
Pallava script, 14
Pan-Islamism, 137
Pancasila, 156
Pansjurah, 100
Pariaman, xvii

Parkin, David, 36
Parsi theatre, 89
Parsi theatre companies, 95
Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), 179
  coming to power in Kelantan, 186
  government, 187
Pasha, Ahmad 'Urabi, 60
Pathan community, 207
Pembela Islam, 145
Penang, Keramat Dato Koya, 58
Perlak, 35
Persatuan Islam (Persis), 145, 217
Persian chronicles, 2
Perso-Urdu tradition, 101
Pertubuhan Perpaduan Pembebasan Patani, 201
pesantren movement, 75
Philippine language, Indian influences, 27
pilgrimage networks, Indian Ocean, 224–28
piracy, 33
Pires, Tomé, xvii, 33
Plato, 162
Pollock, Sheldon, 15, 16, 24, 55
Polo, Marco, 32
Pondok Darul Ansar Kampong Lalo, 188
pre-colonial Asia, history, 1–10
pre-Islamic Arabia, 153
Prince of Wales Theatrical Company, 91
Proclamation of Liberty, 136
Progressive Islam, xxi, 145, 150, 151, 152, 158, 161, 162
Protector of Turkey, 111
Pulau Besar, 225

Q
Qadianism, 163
Qadiri Sufi order, 38
Qadiriyya order, 74
Quanzhou Bay, 31

R
Rasjad, E., 162
Rasul Malai, 55
Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam, 154
regional Islam, debates, xv
Reid, Anthony, 8, 33
reversed Orientalism, 213
Review of Religions, The, 140
Riau, 95
Ridout, Dudley, 115
Rifat, M.M., 117
Rinkes, D.A., 128
Risalah Ahmadiyya, 143
Rochor River, Singapore, 96
Rothermund, Dietmar, xv

S
Salafism, xviii
Salvatore, Armando, 135
Samudera-Pasai kingdom, 18
Sanskrit *kavya*, 16
Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia, 155, 162
Sarekat Islam, 122, 134, 144
Sayf al-Rijal, 177
Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 60
Sayyid Muhamad Aqil, 127
Sayyid Yusuf Saddiq, 226
Sayyid Umar, 115, 127, 176
School for Native Civil Servants, 122
School for Native Teachers, 122
Seh Samud, 73
Sejarah Melayu, 51, 177
Semarang, 92
Sepoys, 95
Serat Dermagandhul, 82
Serat Samud, 69
Serjeant, R.B., 37
Seroean Party Nasional Hindia, 122
Shafi'i *madhhab*, 37
Shafi'i traditions, xx
Shah al-Hamid, 59

Shah Waliullah, 151, 181
shahada, 79
Shakh Wahid Bakhsh, 223
shari'a-mindedness, ancient and modern, 182–89
Shattariyya, 75
Shaykh al-Islam, 177
Shihab al-Din bin Sulayman, 55
Sierra Leone, 116
Sinar Acheh, 145
Sinar Djawa, 116
Sinar Islam, 143, 145
Singai Virthamani, 94
Singapore
  printing industry, 94, 100
  Rochor River, 96
Singapore Jawi Peranakan community, 94
Singapore Mutiny, 123–27
Sino-Malabari relation, 33
social history, rise of, 2
South Asia, xiv
  Early Modern, 10
  historiography, 7
  Islamization, 18
  theatre texts, 97
South India
  rise of Cholas, 29
  Sufi literature, 69
South Indian trade, Southeast Asia, 26
South-Eastern Islamists, 155, 156
Southall, Aidan, 3
Southeast Asia
  Age of Commerce, 9
  Arab community, 115
  Arab interest in, 30
  key trading entrepôt, 14
  spice trade, 31–34
  Tamil-speaking Muslims, 50
  trade and Islam, 35–36
  trade with South Asia, 26
Sri Indramawan, 91
Sri Mudawan, 91
Srivijaya, 13
  decline of, 35
state-formation, 13
Stein, Burton, 3
Straits Settlements, 58, 59
  Legislative Council, 110
Subedar Muhamed Zaman, 126
Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, 63
Suez Canal, 117
  opening of, 86
Sufi identity, across Indian Ocean, 219–35
Sufi literature, South Indian, 69
Sufi masters, reformist agendas, 228
Sufi ritual practices, 22
Sufi *tariqas*, 37, 198
Sufism, xviii, 18, 36–38, 162, 176
  definition, 222
Sukhothai, 17
Sukkur, xiii
Sulayman bin Sadaq, 48, 51
Sultan al-'Arifin, 225
Sultan Iskandar Muda, 177
Sultan Iskandar Thani, Aceh, 177
Sultan of Brunei, 114
Sultan of Johore, 127
Sultan of Kedah, 90
Sultan of Kelantan, 115
Suluk Ngabdulsalam, 76
Suluk Seh Ngabdulsalam, 82
Sunda Islands, 33
Surabaya, 92, 95
Syair Indera Sebaha, 99
Syair Laili Majnun, 98, 99
Syed, J.W., 150, 158

T

Tablighi conversion narratives, 211
Tablighi Jama'at, 135, 195–213, 199
  Indianization of Southeast Asia, 196
Tablighi Jama'at movement, 61
  formation of, 197
Tablighi network, 196

Taj Mahal, 205
Talal Asad, 157
Tambaiah, Stanley, 6
Tang dynasty, 32
Tanglin Barracks, 124, 125
Tankai Cinekan, 60
tarekat, 74, 75
Thapar, Romila, 3
theatre plays, books from, 95–101
theistic democracy, 159
theories of cultural contact, South and Southeast Asia, 1–24
theory of Indianization, 14
theory of the mandala, 6
Tjokroaminoto, H.O.S., 144
Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, 136
transculturation, 15
Tsar of Russia, 114
Turkic conquests, 2

U
Uch Sharif, 226
umma, global, xiii
Ummahat al-Muminin, 142
United Malays National Organization (UMNO), 185
United States, rise of, 6
universal sovereignty, 15
University Al-Jamiah Al-Islamiah, 179
University of Indonesia, library, 71
University of Lahore, 182
Urdu, 90
  plays in, 96
Urdu-speaking Muslims, 52

V
vaishya theories, 12
vaishyas, 18
van Leur, J.C., 5
van Ronkel, Ph. S., xxiii
Victoria Memorial Hall, 134
Victoria Theatrical Company, 90
Vijayanagara empire, 28
Vittiya Vicarini, 61
von Moltke, Helmuth Johannes Ludwig, 119
von Sanders, Otto Liman, 111

W
wahdat al-shudud, 179
Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani, 221
Walther, Christoph Theodosius, 53
Wang Da-yuan, 32
Wassmuss, Wilhelm, 118
wayang kulit, 95
Wayang Parsi, xx
Wayang Parsi troupe, 91
wayang theatre, 73
Wazie Indie, 60
weapons, smuggling of, 120
Weberian theories, 6
Weltpolitik, 110
Western colonialism, 199
Wheatley, Paul, 13, 34
Windels, E., 120
Wittfogel, Karl, 6
Wolters, O.W., 5, 6, 13, 24
World War I, 109
wujudiyya, 177

Y
Yakopu Cittar, 53
Yemen, 37
  Rasulid dynasty, 30
Yong-le (Emperor), 32
Yusuf al-Maqassari, 50

Z
Zafar Ali Khan, 140
Zheng He, 33

1. A sixteenth-century view of Calicut.

Source: Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Israel, Shapell Family Digitization Project, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dept. of Geography, Historic Cities Project.

2. A traditional Malabar mosque (photographed in the early twentieth century) with a covered veranda and multi-storeyed wooden superstructure. Its circular turret recalls the region's Shiva temples; according to Ludovico de Varthema, its function was akin to that of a minaret.

Source: Archives mission 21: Basel Mission, ref. no. QC-30.11100010.

3. Calicut's Mithqal Mosque. Malabar's mosques share many stylistic features with those of maritime Southeast Asia.

Source: Sebastian Prange.

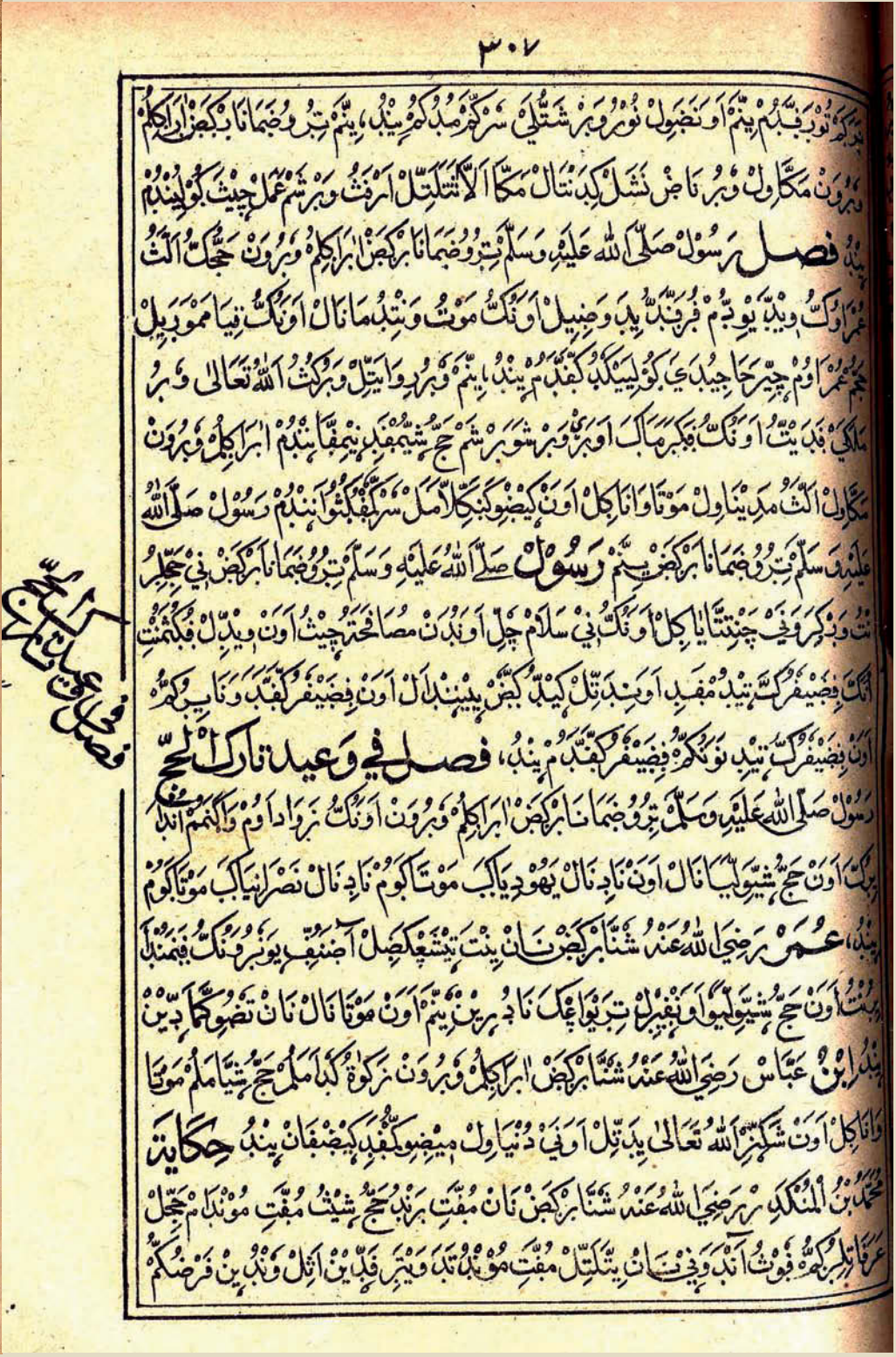
اتس كاكي يڠ كيري دان جاڠن اڠكو برکنچڠ فد حال اڠكو برديري
ملينكن درفد ضرورة دان همفنكن اولهم استنجاء ايت
انتارمماكي ايردان بات مک جكلو اڠكو كهنداك استنجاء
دڠن بات مک هندق له اڠكو سافوند تمفت استنجاء اية
دڠن تيک بوه بات اتوسات بات تناف ا ديكين تيک فنجورو
دان هندقله بات استنجاء ايت سوچ لاک كاسد سكيرا
مڠميلڠكن روف بحسر ايت دمكين لاک اڠكو سافوذكر
موتيک كال دڠن تيک بات اتو تيک تمفت سات باتو مک
جكلو تيا دسوچ دڠن تيک كال ايت اڠكو ليهي اكندى ليم
كال اتو توجه كال هڠک سوچ دان جاڠن اڠكو استنجاء دڠن
تاڠن كانن مو ملينكن دڠن تاڠن كيري دان اڠكو باچ
فد كتيک سلسى درفد استنجاء ايت دلو رتندس: اَللّٰهُمَّ
طَهِّرْ قَلْبِيْ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ وَحَصِّنْ فَرْجِيْ مِنَ الْفَوَاحِشِ دان
هندقله اڠكو كوسقكن تاڠن موكمدين درفد سلسى
استنجاء ايت كبوم انو كفد سوات كمدين مک باسه اكندى

فَصْلٌ فِيْ آدَابِ الْوُضُوْءِ

اين سوات فصل فد مينتاكن اداب مڠمبل ايرسمبهيڠ مک

4. Jawi text from a lithograph edition of Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani's *Hidayat al-Salikin* (Indonesia: Maktabat al-Madaniyya, 1354 H.)

Source: R. Michael Feener.



5. Page from *Fath al-majid fi hadith al-nabi al-hamid*, a Tamil translation of *hadith*-accounts published in 1292 AH.

Source: Torsten Tschacher.

6. Signboard of the Vientiane Friday Mosque in Lao, English, Arabic, and Tamil; off Thanom Setthathirat, Vientiane, Laos.

Source: Torsten Tschacher.

7. A *Bangsawan* group in the 1880s. The text in the background reads: "Empress Victoria Jawi Peranakan Theatrical Company Penang Indra Bangsawan".
Source: Reproduced from Reena Singh, *Journey through Singapore*, p. 102.

THE PERSIAN
LADIES AND PARSEE
OPERA COMPANY OF BOMBAY.,

GOOL-E-BAKAVLEE.
(لاكوان كل بكاولي)

8. Announcement for a performance of the play *Gul Bakawali* by the Persian Ladies and Parsee Opera Company of Bombay in Kampong Boyan, Singapore.

Source: Reproduced with permission from Cambridge University Library, Scott UR 6.22.

9. Back cover of *Syair Indra Sebaha*, published in Singapore in the late nineteenth century.

Source: Reproduced with permission from British Library Board. All rights reserved.

10. Laili's father finds out about the two lovers (*Syair Laili Majnun* (1888), opposite p. 23).

Source: Leiden University Library. Photo by Jan van der Putten.

11. The "wizard" trickster is coaxing Aladdin.

Source: "Bahwa inilah *Hikayat Alauddin* yang terlalu amat indah ceretanya terkarang ole Tuan A.F. van Dewall. Tercap di matbaat Jawi Peranakan oleh Haji Muhammad Siraj — Singapura, 1889." (KITLV Library).

12. The wizard tries to switch lamps.

Source: "Bahwa inilah *Hikayat Aladdin* yang terlalu amat indah ceretanya terkarang ole Tuan A.F. van Dewall. Tercap di matbaat Jawi Peranakan oleh Haji Muhammad Siraj — Singapura, 1889." (KITLV Library).

FB : Rahmat Fauzi Al-Barusi

NUS

National University
of Singapore